Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/americanmuralpai0000paul_j9t0

AMERICAN MURAL PAINTING

AMERICAN MURAL PAINTING

A STUDY OF THE IMPORTANT DECORATIONS BY DISTINGUISHED ARTISTS IN THE UNITED STATES

By

PAULINE KING

BOSTON
NOYES, PLATT & COMPANY
MCMII

Copyright, 1901, by
Noyes, Platt & Company
(*Incorporated*)

Entered at Stationers' Hall

Press of George H. Ellis
Boston, U.S.A.

PREFATORY NOTE

The adequate illustration of several of the earlier chapters of this volume has been a matter of great difficulty. Many of the earlier examples of mural painting are so placed that it is impossible to obtain new photographs of them, and the ability to reproduce them has therefore depended upon the possibility of obtaining prints from negatives made before the paintings were set in place or from the artists' original sketches where these were accessible. There has been especial difficulty in the case of the decorations of the Columbian Exposition, nearly all of the examples of which have had to be printed from electrotypes of the illustrations used in magazines published at that time. The thanks of the publishers and of the author are, therefore, due to Messrs. Harper & Brothers, to the Century Company, and to Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons for electrotypes from their respective magazines, without which it would have been impossible to give any adequate pictorial idea of this important period in the development of the art.

Thanks are also due to Messrs. Curtis & Cameron, whose Copley Prints include the greater portion of the paintings mentioned in this volume, to Mr. C. Klackner, Mr. N. L. Stebbins, and to all of the artists whose works are reproduced, for permission for the reproductions and for cordial assistance in the details of the work.

CONTENTS

Introduction: The Art of Mural Painting . . . . . *page* 3

I. The Beginnings of Mural Painting in the United States 15

II. The Mural Paintings of William Morris Hunt . . . 39

III. Early Progress in the Art 55

IV. The Columbian Exposition 62

V. The Columbian Exposition (*Conclusion*) 82

VI. The Boston Public Library: Puvis de Chavannes — Abbey 93

VII. The Boston Public Library: John S. Sargent 124

VIII. The Influence of Art Organisations on Mural Painting 145

IX. The Walker Art Building and the Mendelssohn Glee Club 154

X. The Library of Congress 169

XI. The Library of Congress (*Conclusion*) 203

XII. The Appellate Courts Building, New York 219

XIII. Miscellaneous Work, 1892–1901 239

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Ascension of Our Lord	*John La Farge*	frontispiece
Christ and Nicodemus	" " "	*page* 19
Music	" " "	24
The Drama	" " "	25
Angel of the Moon	" " "	33
Adoring Angels	" " "	36, 37
The Flight of Night	*William Morris Hunt*	43
The Discoverer	" " "	47
Detail from The Flight of Night	" " "	50
Fortune (Detail from The Discoverer)	" " "	51
The Ballet	*George W. Maynard*	57
The Chorus	" " "	57
The Bowling Green	*Edwin A. Abbey*	58, 59
Night, Day, and Dawn	*T. W. Dewing*	60
The Armourer's Craft	*Edwin H. Blashfield*	71
The Telephone	*J. Carroll Beckwith*	73
Pearl	*Walter Shirlaw*	75
Ceramic Painting	*Kenyon Cox*	77
The Textile Arts	*Robert Reid*	79
Autumn	*George W. Maynard*	85
Riders of Winged Horses (Detail)	*William De L. Dodge*	86
Primitive Woman	*Mary MacMonnies*	87
Modern Woman (Section)	*Mary Cassatt*	89
Detail from Border of Tympanum	" "	91
The Muses Welcoming the Genius of Enlightenment	*Puvis de Chavannes*	95
Physics	" "	100
Chemistry	" "	100
History	" "	101
Astronomy	" "	101
Philosophy	" "	102
Pastoral Poetry	" "	102
Dramatic Poetry	" "	103
Epic Poetry	" "	103
Detail from The Muses	" "	107

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Triumph of Time	*John Elliott*	*page* 108, 109
Detail from The Triumph of Time	" "	111
The Vision	*Edwin A. Abbey*	113
The Oath of Knighthood	" " "	114
The Round Table	" " "	116, 117
The Departure for the Grail	" " "	119
The Detail from The Castle of the Grail	" " "	122
The Triumph of Religion	*John S. Sargent*	125
Moloch (Detail)	" " "	129
Astarte (Detail)	" " "	133
The Captivity of the Jews (Lunette)	" " "	137, 138
The Hebrew Prophets (Frieze)	" " "	141
Justice	*Edward Simmons*	147
The Fates	" "	150
Liberty, Equality, Fraternity	" "	151
Athens	*John La Farge*	155
Rome	*Elihu Vedder*	157
Florence	*Abbott H. Thayer*	161
Venice	*Kenyon Cox*	163
Study	*Charles Sprague Pearce*	172
Religion	" " "	173
Recreation	" " "	174
Labour	" " "	175
Urania	*Edward Simmons*	176
Calliope	" "	177
Melpomene	" "	178
Lyric Poetry	*Henry Oliver Walker*	179
The Boy of Winander	" " "	181
Ganymede	" " "	182
Adonis	" " "	183
The Cairn	*John W. Alexander*	185
Egyptian Hieroglyphics	" " "	185
Oral Tradition	" " "	186
Picture Writing	" " "	186
The Manuscript Boook	" " "	187
The Printing-Press	" " "	187
Paris	*Walter McEwen*	188
Prometheus	" "	189

ILLUSTRATIONS

Hercules	*Walter McEwen*	*page* 190
Law	*Frederick Dielman*	191
History	" "	192
Minerva (Mosaic)	*Elihu Vedder*	193
Good Administration	" "	196
Government	" "	197
Details from The Evolution of Civilisation	*Edwin H. Blashfield*	198, 199
The Five Senses	*Robert Reid*	202
Physics	*Walter Shirlaw*	204
Botany	" "	204
Aglaia	*Frank W. Benson*	206
Thalia	" " "	206
Spring	" " "	207
Winter	" " "	207
The Arts	*Kenyon Cox*	208
The Sciences	" "	209
The State	*William B. Van Ingen*	211
Peace	*Gari Melchers*	211
Ceiling (Library of Congress)	*George W. Maynard*	215
Ambition (Ceiling)	*William De L. Dodge*	216
Detail from The Transmission of the Law	*H. Siddons Mowbray*	220
Justice (Detail)	*Robert Reid*	221
Justice (Detail)	*Willard L. Metcalf*	223
The Wisdom of the Law	*Henry Oliver Walker*	229
The Justice of the Law	*Edward Simmons*	230
The Power of the Law	*Edwin H. Blashfield*	231
Panels from Frieze (Appellate Courts)	*Kenyon Cox*	235
Homage to Woman	*Will H. Low*	241
January	*Edward Simmons*	244
February	" "	245
Detail from The Triumph of Manhattan	*C. Y. Turner*	248
A Florentine Festival	*Edwin H. Blashfield*	251
Pittsburg	" " "	253
Thesmophoria	*Francis D. Millet*	254
Golden Autumn	*Will H. Low*	257
Morning Quitting Night	*Edward Simmons*	258, 259
Panels from The Canterbury Pilgrimage	*Robert V. V. Sewell*	260, 261
America Unveiling Her Natural Strength	*Robert Reid*	262

AMERICAN MURAL PAINTING

A STUDY OF THE IMPORTANT DECORATIONS BY DISTINGUISHED ARTISTS IN THE UNITED STATES

INTRODUCTION: THE ART OF MURAL PAINTING

The decoration of a wall surface is one of the most reasonable and natural forms under which the arts are practised.

Although archæologists trace, with many interesting details, the various steps of its evolution,— through ages when nations that possessed no other means of preserving histories and records of the important events of the time, or of their religious beliefs, made signs, characters, and rude representations of human figures and animals upon stone,— those studies are of such intricacy and depth, and are so entirely technical, that, while they are of value to the critic and the special student of art and letters, it is not necessary for the general reader to go far into the subject of these early suggestions,— of what, in the fulness of time, has become the splendid art with which we are familiar.

Most of the facts of life can be reduced to a very simple explanation, like that of the origin of portrait painting, which legend ascribes to a maiden, who traced the outline of the shadow of her lover's face upon the wall, and solaced herself with this reminder of his lineaments during his absences. Underlying all theories, and the discoveries of the customs of ancient peoples, with which the subject can be weighted, its establishment and the hold that it has retained upon the favour alike of barbarous and civilised nations lie in its practical and sympathetic nature. The temptation offered by the broad plain surface, of an interior or exterior, sets the fingers of even

the least mischievous child twitching with the desire to mark upon it with his pencils or daub upon it with his colours; and to the artist or artisan with even a slight dexterity of hand there comes an almost irresistible longing to try his powers, so eminently suitable is the opportunity for picture-making.

This suitability, and the deeply rooted feeling in the heart of man in all ages, conditions, and stations, which seeks for some way of beautifying his home, his place of worship, and the tombs of his race, account for mural painting in the past, and teach that its future is assured. It may fall into decay, it may be neglected for years; but it is bound to revive again and again.

Traditions and examples of the art have been handed down from the great civilisations of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, in all of which the practice was carried to great perfection. The colours are still bright which the Egyptians used four thousand years ago, when delineating the stories of their gods and kings and their wars and conquests upon the walls of temples, tombs, and palaces. These pictures have remained to be the admiration of succeeding generations, that have read in them, as in an open book, what manner of men these ancient peoples were, and have read of their dress, customs, and habits, and how they lived, ate, drank, died, and were buried.

The whole system of decorating is astonishingly gorgeous, every part of the architecture being coloured and covered with designs; and the constant repetition of forms and tints gives dignity and formality to the magnificence of the effect. The archaic manner of drawing and the curious absence of a true observation of nature, which continued for centuries, in no way lessen the fine effect and the splendid understanding shown of the great fundamental principles of decorative art.

These principles must be recognised in their full importance; for they have an eternal significance, and have always been the same in the best periods, showing through the different forms of expression that have obtained according to the training, development, and talents of bodies of artists. They may be described baldly as resulting in a manner of execution that does not attempt to disguise the fact that the painting is on a solid wall and a level surface, and which works toward the end of perfect harmony in design, colour, and form between the finished picture and its architectural environment.

A distinctly flat method of painting that does not lay undue stress upon perspective is characteristically decorative. The design, when complete, should seem woven of one piece from end to end. When it fails in this, it is to be criticised as inharmonious; and either in its own borders or with the architecture it will be unpleasantly obtrusive, and will tell as too dark holes or spots or too vivid patches of colour.

There have been great masters that have left the magnificent work of their hands upon walls and ceilings, whose temperaments forbade them to be bound in this way. They could not confine themselves to decorative limits. Some of their pictures are the glory of the world, but they should be accepted as pictures: they are not to be regarded as decorations in a strict sense of the term.

The Egyptians and Assyrians used no perspective whatever; but, however crude and rudimentary their methods, the ancient work teaches a profound lesson in unity of impression. The art of these nations is especially interesting to our public because of the remarkable resurrection of its images and styles in John Sargent's decorations in the Boston Public Library.

He has made them familiar to thousands that will never see the East and its wonderful monuments, but that now have the advantage of knowing the early art through this clear and beautiful reproduction.

The decorative canons were strictly followed in Grecian mural painting. Very few fragments have survived to tell of its glories, but the fact is established that colour either in plain tints or ornamented with patterns or figures was regarded as essential to the completion of an edifice. Though it is possible to put together a number of facts about the matter, and small plaster models of ancient buildings are often seen, coloured after the fashion in which they were probably finished, yet this gives but a bare idea of the system, and nothing of the soul and spirit of the art of which the classic authors write in terms of the highest eulogy, ranking the achievement in painting quite on a par with the superb sculpture.

The artistic methods of working transmitted through the Romans is undoubtedly still a living influence, though it is as hopeless to try to reconstruct an idea of the perfection of the actual accomplishment as it would be to try to divine the force and beauty of their statues without any of them being in existence. It only needs one of the Elgin marbles to show that sculpture rose to heights that no imagination could picture.

The Roman writers also boast of their artists that covered the massive walls with paintings of every kind,— historical, religious, genre, still life, and flowers. The examples now extant are of a rather late period. Such as were known to the artists of the Renaissance had a powerful effect upon their

work. Since that time the buried cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum have proved vast storehouses of such treasures.

It is appalling to think of the havoc made of the antique art during the early centuries of the Christian era, when those belonging to the new faith delighted in the destruction of the wealth of monuments which the pagan love of beauty had raised. What priceless treasures were ruthlessly demolished! In a few years the whole body of classic art was broken into fragments, some of its members were totally annihilated, some in their mutilated condition remain to tell of its greatness. But, while the priests and populace enjoyed wreaking vengeance upon anything connected with the earlier religions, in the name of which Christian saints and martyrs had been persecuted, the desire for pictorial representations of sacred persons and Scriptural stories could not be restrained.

Remains of pagan decorations that had escaped the general wreck were slightly altered or accepted as they were, and renamed to suit the requirements of the new religion; and crude but most sincere attempts at original designs were made, although this was in defiance of the commands of bishops and the clergy, who forbade the making of pictures, as distinctly a pagan practice, and tending to keep up the spirit of Paganism. But even though the work incurred the wrath of those in power, and not infrequently was defaced, it was continued until the Catacombs and places of worship were filled with such ornaments; and the authorities were finally compelled to recognise the power and attraction of the art, and became its warmest and most liberal patron.

Although through the centuries of the Byzantine period no originality could be displayed,—for certain forms were con-

tinually repeated, and Madonnas and saints were drawn by prescribed rules, the heads copied after one peculiar mode and the figures covered with stiff, rich-coloured draperies that cannot conceal the deficiencies of structure,—yet these archaic, strangely drawn images, when seen together in their places, have a rare decorative dignity. The buildings at Ravenna, lined with mosaics of such remarkable colours that the interiors seem hollowed out of the heart of rich, softly glowing jewels, showing designs of quaint figures with flat, deep-toned draperies, ornamented with elaborate patterns, still prove an allegiance to the decorative lessons inherited from classic time, and which had lingered after all knowledge of the beauty and construction of the human figure had been forgotten.

Giotto, throwing away the formulas by which his predecessors had bound their talents, carried on the invaluable traditions. He is one of the world's greatest decorative masters; and after him came the tide of the Renaissance, sweeping ever upward and onward. The years saw the birth of a line of unsurpassed mural painters, masters of the art. There was no problem too difficult for their skill, or none that could not be solved in perfect taste. They designed for domes, ceilings, panels of all shapes, for dark or for light interiors, and used figures, arabesques, ornament, with the same unerring judgment. Upon the walls of the churches, palaces, and convents throughout Italy is the vast, triumphant record of their genius.

In this splendid following of groups of world-renowned mural painters, the palm is generally conceded to Raphael, whose achievement is one upon which his fame could rest, had he never painted a picture. He seems to have caught up the finest characteristics of his predecessors, and surpassed them,

just as Shakespeare gathered for his purposes all the accomplishment of English literature; or, to quote an exquisite sentence from a recently published essay reviewing the artist in this connection, "then came Raphael, the grand harvester, and gathered up the sheaves of the Renaissance."

It is by the artists grouped under this period that the modern school of mural painters, both abroad and in this country, have been influenced. M. Puvis de Chavannes, returning to the early methods, has shown his contemporaries where invaluable examples of design, harmony, and purity of style, are to be found; and the power of his talents has enforced these doctrines.

The Venetian school may be cited as an example of a body of great artists, perhaps the most remarkable painters known to us, whose methods of designing and manner of execution always resulted in pictures vast in size, beyond the power of any easel to hold, but still easel pictures. Yet what glorious pictures they are! One would not have them changed in the smallest particular. What a loss to the world, had Titian, Veronese, and Tintoretto never painted them!

From the time of Giotto to Raphael, fresco — the classic medium — was used. This can be defined, in a not too technical way, as a process of painting in water colour on wet plaster, the portion of the wall upon which the artist wishes to work being prepared over night, so that it will be in the proper state to receive the colour. If the painting is continued or worked over after the plaster is dry, both the clearness of tone and its permanence are affected. Thus it is necessary to finish a fresco piece by piece; and the freedom of oils, which permits of sketching in, getting the general effect, rubbing in tones to

try their qualities, and painting over, *ad infinitum*, offers advantages which account for its having superseded the earlier method. Fresco is still used in Italy, while in other countries oil colours are preferred.

Allowing for this difference, the scope, the difficulties, the characteristics of the art, are the same as they have ever been. The special points to be observed by the decorator may briefly be noted as the choice of a pattern, design, or composition which shall, in line and mass, have a particular fitness for the architectural position. The scale upon which this shall be executed varies according to the distance at which the painting will be seen, figures in a dome or on a very high ceiling requiring to be over life-size, perhaps several times the normal proportions, to appear properly to spectators upon the floor of the building. Then arise the subtle questions of the amount of light the painting will receive, which governs the tone that may be used; the colour of fresco, woodwork, or marble that may surround it, with which it must be in harmonious accord; just the degree of light and shade and perspective that will produce the desired effect; and the final blending of all of these.

The layman is prone to regard the transformation of small black-and-white or coloured paintings called "original studies for decorations" into the size upon which they are completed as something very difficult, but such is not the case. Careful drawings of good size are made from these first sketches, which in turn are enlarged into the final proportions by a system of squaring which increases the design with mathematical accuracy. These large drawings are called cartoons. The cartoon, or cartoons are then laid against the canvas or plaster wall

which is to receive the decoration, and a transfer is made, for which there are several processes.

Thus much for technicalities which present no greater difficulties to the mural painter, accustomed to the practice of his profession, than those connected with any branch of artistic work. And if to paint over a very large surface is exceedingly laborious, and makes great drains upon physical as well as upon mental strength, yet the sense of power when being thus engaged, the pleasure of having a fine opportunity in which to achieve the best that lies in his talents, and to realise when the work is done that it is not unworthy of the noble position which it has been called to fill, is something to thrill an artist's soul, and bring him a return for the most arduous labours.

The brush that was dropped from the hand of the last of the Italian masters was not used again in a notable way until the middle of the nineteenth century, when the two renowned Frenchmen, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes and Paul Baudry, showed themselves able successors of the illustrious decorators of the Renaissance.

They established the art as a serious and important development of the century, and their influence has spread from their own country to ours. The name of M. Puvis is specially dear to us because of the beautiful paintings from his hand which adorn the Boston Public Library, so that he is not merely a foreign artist, whose reputation is accepted by the public because it is told to do so by writers of books and magazine articles, but is a very real and living fact in the position taken by mural painting on this continent. Any one who is interested in the subject needs only to visit Boston to be able to form an opinion about the man who is considered

to have been the greatest modern decorator. As the descriptions of his paintings occupy the prominent place in the chapters devoted to the Library that their importance merits, it seems best to leave the consideration of M. Puvis's position, qualities of style, et-cetera until that point in the volume is reached.

To appreciate his brilliant compatriot, it is necessary to visit Paris, and he is therefore not so interesting a figure to us, which is also the case abroad where M. Baudry has never had as much popularity as M. Puvis, whom it is fairly the fashion to admire. Yet M. Baudry was in his own way a marvellous artist, and his decorations in the foyer of the Opera House are a most remarkable achievement. To the revivals in France and in this country, modern mural painting is confined. The efforts made by the pre-Raphaelites in England have been directed into other channels,—stained glass, the minor arts, printing, et-cetera. The two nations so closely united by artistic feeling and interests have a common sympathy in this noble art. This is not a partial judgment; and any person who distrusts home talent, and feels that it is presumptuous to rank our paintings and those abroad together, should have his eyes opened by a comparison of the work of the two schools.

For one may go on a pilgrimage through Paris and the French provincial towns, studying, admiring, appreciating, and return home perhaps with some sinking of heart, and be surprised to find how good, serious, and sincere are the paintings on our own walls. The two illustrious men connected with the inauguration of the movement in France stand far above the mass of their countrymen; and one need not be blindly admiring to feel that the decorations by many hands in the Hôtel

de Ville, Paris, do not surpass undertakings of a similar nature here. But not the good average alone must be acknowledged. We also have our masters and our masterpieces.

Prominent in the connection is John La Farge, world-known for his revival of the art of stained glass. He is also a mural painter of a high order. He is a superb colourist, and his designs embody the large decorative qualities with the unique expression of a strong and peculiar genius. John Sargent, with the series in Boston not yet half finished, has shown powers of imagination, characterisation, and technique that few have equalled. His splendid colouring, originality, and the wide range of his expression have astonished even the warmest admirers of the portraits, with which his name was previously identified.

Many and varied are the gifts which the artists have brought to give fulness and richness to the revival. To quote typical instances, the period is indebted to Mr. Abbey for the vivid, picturesque charm that animates *The Quest of the Holy Grail* in the Boston Public Library; to Mr. Vedder for fineness of symbolism, distinguished individuality, and high types of beauty, as in his tympanum *Rome*, at Bowdoin College; to Mr. Walker for poetic feeling and elevated sentiment, as in *Lyric Poetry* in the Congressional Library; to Mr. Blashfield for an interesting manner of arrangement and a pleasing use of portraiture, as in *The Evolution of Civilisation* in the same building; to Mr. Simmons for breadth of conception and methods, and a magnetic personal charm, as in *The Months* and *The Seasons* in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York; to Mr. Mowbray for the exquisite æsthetic impression of *The Transmission of the Law* in the Appellate Court House, New

York; to Mr. Cox for dignity and the gravity of academical methods, as in *The Arts* and *The Sciences* in the Congressional Library; and to Mr. Maynard for his pleasing way of using the Pompeian style, as in *The Virtues*, also in Washington.

The country that can boast the possession of Mr. La Farge's *The Ascension of our Lord*, Mr. Sargent's *Hebrew Prophets*, Mr. Blum's *Moods of Music*, Mr. Thayer's *Florence*, Mr. Simmons's *Melpomene*, and such a wall as that where stand the three imposing images of Justice by Messrs. Blashfield, Simmons, and Walker, need not fear any comparison.

All these paintings are illustrated in the body of the volume, they and others by the same artists taking their places among many more distinguished achievements of eminent men, who could not be included in this brief outline.

The history that follows, of the birth of the art in this country and the steps by which it has attained the importance of the present day, has been an interesting one to write; and, as the studies for one chapter after another have been made, the author has been more and more impressed by the strength and stability of its establishment. So much has been done, and so well done, that it does not seem too remote a dream to believe that this is but a beginning, and the work will go on and on until the whole land is transformed and the walls of the buildings, from ocean to ocean, are adorned with paintings, as in beautiful Italy.

I. THE BEGINNINGS OF MURAL PAINTING IN THE UNITED STATES

The art of mural painting has been established for so short a time in this country that the *doyen* of our corps of decorators, John La Farge, whose early achievements made the beginning of its history, is still working, and planning for the future.

How and why the generation of artistic genius suddenly comes to maturity in the midst of sterile and killing conditions baffles the reason; and it is not until after the lapse of long periods of time, if even then, that the causes and sequences can be traced, and we are as yet too near Mr. La Farge to understand how he could have developed his assured sense of the beautiful and his entirely artistic standards among the inartistic influences of the middle of the nineteenth century. For the commercial spirit had set its stamp of manufacture upon every adjunct of life. Architecture, sculpture, and painting were at a very low ebb of taste.

It is true that Mr. La Farge was born under better circumstances than could be the lot of many of his generation, for he came of an old French family that had brought traditions of European art across the water. His childhood was spent in a house filled with old books and adorned with valuable pictures; and when, upon leaving college in 1856, he was sent abroad to see something of the world before settling down to a legal career, he took up painting, at his father's earnest request, as an accomplishment. In Paris he entered Couture's atelier,

although his attendance there did not continue very long; for, by the master's advice, most of his time was spent copying drawings and paintings by the old masters in the Louvre. Beside this direct study, the young American met at the house of his kinsman, Paul de St. Victor,— the celebrated writer and critic,— Théophile Gautier, Charles Blanc, and many other distinguished persons, whose standards and criticism would alone have been a liberal education. When his acquaintance with this delightful circle had ripened, Charles Blanc asked his companionship on a tour of the Italian galleries; but this trip was not taken. A visit to Munich and Dresden was substituted; and he returned home by way of England, becoming very much interested while there in the pre-Raphaelite movement.

The writer does not intend to dwell upon the lives of the artists whose work goes to make up the subject of this book; but this mention of the influences of Mr. La Farge's youth has been necessary to give a right understanding for the study of our first mural paintings. Later the distinct movements of artistic progression have been owing to many persons, but at this time the record of the individual and the events which fostered his talents is the record of the art.

Any one seeing Mr. La Farge on his return home, when he devoted himself to his legal studies, would not have supposed that his future would be very intimately connected with æsthetic matters; but gradually the interest excited in Paris usurped all others, and he became more and more absorbed in it, until all other professional ambition was abandoned. Although the desire to essay decoration was distinctly in his mind during the years when he was becoming famous as an

illustrator and painter of flowers and landscapes, no branch of artistic work is more dependent upon patronage than this; and he was obliged to wait for an opportunity before making any progress. For the decorator, however much he may feel the courage of his convictions, cannot, like his brother whose labours are confined to easel pictures,— who for years may produce canvases which no one buys and no one cares for, and yet be of undoubted sanity,— paint a great collection of ceilings, altar-pieces, etc., for imaginary positions. Of course, a few experiments could be tried; but, from the very nature of the art, the mural painter without a practical outlook lacks inspiration.

In 1861 Mr. La Farge finished a panel of *Saint Paul Preaching at Athens* for the Church of the Paulist Fathers, New York, which for some reason was not accepted by the architects, and in 1862–63 he began a large triptych of the Crucifixion; but the project was abandoned when only the two smaller divisions, in which the Madonna and Saint John are represented, were completed. These remained for many years the property of the artist, until they passed into the possession of William C. Whitney, Esquire, their present owner. When they were seen, though lacking the finish of their proper setting, they made a most profound impression upon the people who were interested in such matters; and word got about that Mr. La Farge had done some very remarkable things, of a kind which it had been supposed would never be seen in this country, unless Italian churches and convent walls could be stripped of their frescos. This impression was deepened by the artist's next success with some decorations for a dining-room; and these, coming under the notice of H. H. Richardson, led the architect to think that he had found a man that would be able

to carry out his ideas of bringing the sister arts of stained glass and painting to the adornment of the buildings he might erect in the future, and he engaged Mr. La Farge to undertake the first decorative work that should be at his disposal. They thought that this would be in the new Brattle Street church in Boston. George Butler was to be associated with Mr. La Farge; and certain plans were made, though these were doomed never to be carried out, as the whole idea had to be abandoned.

However, Mr. Richardson continued faithful to his ideals; and, when he was building Trinity Church in Boston, he persuaded the Building Committee to give Mr. La Farge entire charge of the interior decorations. With him he took as helpers at different times Francis Lathrop, Francis D. Millet, Augustus St. Gaudens, George W. Maynard, S. L. Smith, Edwin G. Champney, and George Rose. Skilled and unskilled workmen, even carpenters, were also employed for frescoing the walls in plain tints, stencilling conventional patterns, et-cetera. In an address made some years ago before a Society of Architects, Mr. La Farge recalled most vividly the peculiar experiences of this band of pioneers of which he was the head and moving spirit. This paper will be quoted at some length, as no throwing back of the imagination into a past which must be taken at second hand could equal the description of the master mind that made out of this opportunity so splendid an event that forever afterward it can be said, "In 1876, owing to John La Farge, mural painting in this country was elevated to the dignity of an art."

"September, 1876," says Mr. La Farge, "Mr. Richardson summoned me to his bedside to say that under certain conditions the interior decoration of Trinity Church, Boston, which

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

CHRIST AND NICODEMUS. By JOHN LA FARGE.

he was then contemplating, might be given to me. By leaving large surfaces of wall and roof space quite bare and flat, he had made the necessity for decoration or decorative treatment by colour. But there was little money and little time: I should have only a few days over four months to consider the question, to make drawings and plans, obtain estimates, get the decision of the Building Committee, and carry on the work to its end. Moreover, there was no money for suitable scaffolding for this big building,—the central tower is one hundred feet high,—we should have to employ the scaffolding still in use for the construction and completion of the roof and roof-tiling. The enormous windows might not be filled in until very late in the winter, and the carpenters would be putting in their fittings while we were still at work. We had thus to face material conditions that were difficult and not devoid of personal danger; and, as all the architect's plans and measurements had been altered in the course of the work, we could not avail ourselves of any such usual help to make correct drawings in advance. Sketches might help, but drawings must be made as the work went along.

"Within these conditions, more or less distinctly understood, the work was carried on. It was necessary to contract with decorative firms to supply workmen and a competent foreman for most of the plain wall-painting and some part of the plain ornament, and even their work was unsatisfactorily done. The materials for the trades of decoration were purposely bad, because, as their chiefs explained to me, the fashions in decoration changed every few years, and were helped to change by the profitable decay of colours. I had to fight hand-to-hand with commerce. I had to purchase myself materials of good

value or high grade, and to use other and sound methods of applying them, devised on the spot. Of the workmen employed I had to retain certain individuals who were devoted to me and to my ideas of good work; and, finally, I had to finish the work with these alone. . . .

. . . "With the dreamy, yet protective, foresight of artists, I had guessed at these difficulties, and my choice of general designs met Mr. Richardson's Romanesque building on a common ground of artistic sympathy. His chosen form of decoration, the Romanesque of Southern France, seemed to me especially suited to the constructive situation. The style was indefinite, and yet in relation with classical reasonableness and refinement. It allowed the artistic veiling of ornament to pass at will from horizontal to perpendicular arrangements, and to follow loosely or with precision, as best might be, the architect's somewhat accidental surfaces, of which I had no exact measurements or plans. It would permit, as long ago it had permitted, a wide range of skill and artistic training: the rough bungling of the native and the ill-digested culture of the foreigner. I could think myself back to a time when I might have employed some cheap Byzantine of set habits, some ill-equipped Barbarian, some Roman dwelling near by for a time — perhaps even some artist keeping alive both the tradition and culture of Greece. In all the heavy prose of the actual work these analogies were verified, and I was contented with my choice of a scheme that might meet the emergencies of changing subordinates and their various aptitudes, as well as the very materials I could use.

"Richardson supported me usually, but sometimes he exacted concessions to disguise what he thought his own

mistakes, which variations, being made to please him, seemed yet to me unsuitable and inadequate; while certain concessions had to be made for merely temporary reasons,— reasons no longer existing when the work was completed. Our driving hurry, increased by the necessity insisted upon by the architect of never appearing undecided, might excuse almost anything. Still, there were many simple points in which for outside reasons one had to yield to the architect, whose theories and practice were limited. It will always be difficult, for instance, to have a mere architect understand that the placing of stained-glass windows in a building must largely modify colour, so that a hue which is violent in out-of-door light may become very quiet within, as we know, for instance, in the red colours used for painting brickwork.

"I do not believe that you young architects study the use of colours in decoration in any strict manner, so that my point of view would not be obvious to you, as it might have been long ages ago. But the use of colour in architectural decoration, as we can trace it in the older work,— the Greek, let us say, or even the Pompeian,— is not a mere arrangement of pleasing tints. It is a matter of construction by colour. . . .

. . . "I have gone into these details to explain more fully how much of a change I proposed to make from the habits of previous decoration. I have always been impressed by one great quality, never failing in the work of the past that we care for. It may be bungling, like some of the Romanesque, for instance, or it may be extremely refined, like the Greek; but it is never like our usual modern work, which suggests machinery, that is to say, the absence of personality. I knew that our work at Trinity would have to be faulty, but this much I was

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

MUSIC. By JOHN LA FARGE.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE DRAMA. By JOHN LA FARGE.

able to accomplish,—that almost every bit of it would be living, would be impossible to duplicate. I was fortunate in having the assistance of five or six men whom you know, inexperienced, it is true, but artists, and as far as possible their hands and mine worked over the commonest details of ornament quite as much as the more pretentious figure painting. In fact, I frequently took for myself the passages of ornament most often slurred over because of their presumed humility.

"Thus we may be said to have turned the sharp corner of a new path, which of course is the old. . . . We had a difficult time of it, as you may well suppose. Every physical discomfort was against us, and, moreover, there was the necessity of using improvised methods, and of employing material made up for the occasion which yet should be lasting, and all this in what I may call a frantic hurry. At the end we had to work both night and day, and were only able to guess at what might be the result when the scaffolding should come down."

Under all their difficulties, when the work was finished, the result was such an artistic effect as had not been seen in this country before. Mr. Richardson's employment of the Romanesque style had been continually borne in mind by Mr. La Farge; and his decorations gave the distinct character of the period, when pagan structures were turned into Christian churches, and mythological imagery was mingled with, or adapted to, the requirements of the new faith. In the square central tower the decorations are most varied. High up above the windows are lunettes containing small Bible scenes. One of these, a child leading wild beasts, though of good Old Testament inspiration, might well have been found, by an early Christian architect, on a temple wall, and left there undisturbed

when the building was altered. Over the window arches are graceful scrolls, held by youthful angels; and in the side spaces are heroic figures of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, the prophets Moses, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, and the young King David. The painting is rather flatly done on the terra-cotta red wall; and, although most of the detail is lost from the distance at which the spectator is obliged to stand, an ascent to the gallery well repays one. The light from the toned windows subdues into the effect intended, the colouring, which was at first exposed to the pitiless glare of plain white glass, and suffered somewhat therefore from criticism at the time, since it was difficult to make the public understand that every condition of the completed building had been taken into consideration, so that the work might be of permanent value. The general colour throughout the edifice is the warm terra-cotta red used in the tower; and with this harmonious background, and the magnificent stained glass which was put into place at the same time,— the positive resurrection of a decayed art which has made Mr. La Farge's name world-famous,— the remaining paintings, a figure of Saint James under an arch in the north transept and two panels, *Christ and Nicodemus* and *Christ and the Woman of Samaria* in the nave, shine like rich jewels in a perfect setting. An extension of time was given for the completion of the two latter; and, when the other scaffolds throughout the church were taken down, the small ones were allowed to remain, that the work might be continued without interruption. They show no signs of haste, uncertainty, or experiment, but are as complete in effect, as assured in manner, and as satisfying as though the artist had brought to the task multiplied experiences and years of matured success. Simplicity of com-

position is one of the charms of Mr. La Farge's work. He presents the events of the Old or the New Testament in so natural a way that any questioning of what must have happened — being such a natural matter — is reduced to folly; and this fundamental quality,— the spirit of a believer working through the mind and hand,— in conjunction with his splendid artistic powers, gives a reality to his religious paintings which is rarely found in the art or literature of our day.

The Woman of Samaria has the easy air of a quiet casual meeting. The woman has gone out to fill her pitcher, and rests upon the stone seat built inside the low wall that surrounds the well. She has fallen into conversation with the stranger also seated there; and, in the eagerness with which she listens to the words that fall gently from his lips, she clasps the top of the stone with one hand. Her whole attitude is one of expectancy and hope. The white clouds flit across the deep blue, twilight sky behind the yellowish-brown wall. The jar, showing the service on which she came, stands between herself and the Christ; and in the gathering dusk her white raiment makes a subdued light note with the deep blue and red of his travelling garments. Their feet rest upon the well-curb, below which gleams the surface of the water.

In *Christ and Nicodemus* the meeting is also in the twilight. The pair are talking beside a window, through which is seen a low-toned landscape. Nicodemus, wrapped in a voluminous, red mantle, sits upon a low seat; and the light coming from an unseen source brightens his old face and brings out rich gleams of colour in the folds upon his bosom and lap. Christ, placed much higher on the canvas, is within the glow of the same light, which illumines the blue cloak that slips from one

shoulder, displaying a red garment underneath. His face is in quiet shadow,— a most patient, lovable countenance, distinctly of the historical type, and yet not belittled into prettiness. The sentiment of repose, so pleasantly conveyed in the quiet scene, the arrangement of light, which brings out exquisite gleams of brightness upon a rich depth of tone, and the interesting character of the heads combine to make this canvas one which dwells long in the memory.

The development of Mr. La Farge's talents was ripe, and the stamp of his individuality is upon these paintings. In them are fully embodied the qualities of style that are recognised in all his later achievements, and give them a distinction that is wholly his own; that all can perceive, all admire, but which no one can repeat, since they are the unique expression of a specially constituted artistic temperament. His decorative feeling is unerring. No figure or tone ever tells as a spot or sounds a jarring note in his compositions. He sweeps the effect together into such a mass of light and shade, colour and design, as makes it seem woven into one piece; and, indeed, a single part depends so much upon its relation to the whole that fragments removed from their positions — especially as their interest is quite often independent of careful drawing or characterisation — are usually disappointing. This, indeed, is the true principle of decoration, without which all that is done in its name is quite unworthy,— as is taught now in art schools,— although Mr. La Farge did not gain the faculty in any school or by any code or teaching, but by observation of Italian wall-paintings and Japanese designs, and by grace of his own Heaven-sent talents. Added to this, he is a colourist of the very first rank. There is something supremely natural

in the beauty of this dominant quality. It is as if the artist had very clear eyes to see nature in its true colours, which ordinary eyes can guess at, but fall far short of seeing the perfect vision. His harmonies give an impression of splendid reality. This note indeed is so strong that it makes the painting itself seem very durable, as if it had been done with extremely pure pigments, and in a manner that would add no inner decay to the changes that time must work upon it. Only those who are familiar with Mr. La Farge's superb gift can form any idea of his use of jewel-like or of dull æsthetic tints, and the unerring judgment with which he places them together; of effects which are borrowed from the sunrise and the sunset; of broad, rich shadows, lighted where folds or forms permit, into brilliancy that suggests the opalescent hues that he loves to work into his glass windows. Every shade and tone is upon his palette, and their combinations are unlimited. But to describe the effects made by the brush of a great colourist, to give the æsthetic power of the whole impression, the right value of shades that are unique, and the way in which their beauty is heightened and transfigured by each other, is beyond the power of words.

When Trinity Church was finished, Mr. La Farge was asked to decorate St. Thomas's Church, New York. He made a magnificent design for the pentagonal chancel, in which he combined sculpture, stained glass, painting, carving, and inlay, such an ensemble as the old masters would have loved; and it was in their spirit that the work was carried on, for not only the general plan and the wall paintings were his special care, but even the architectural mouldings, the wood-work, the ornament of the picture frames, the delicate cornice, and the elegant

pilasters were executed under his supervision, and, indeed, he sometimes lent a hand to the actual work, in order to bring out the exact results he had in mind. His design was not entirely completed, and there is still lacking the crowning cornice and the pillars which were to frame the bishop's chair; and, although this condition has remained for so many years, it is to be hoped that the time will come when the artist will be given the opportunity of adding these important accessories.

The centre of the wall under the high windows is occupied by a reredos in alto-relievo by Augustus St. Gaudens, the design of which is a great cross with four tiers of angels kneeling on either side. The remainder of the space is filled by two large paintings.

The subject of the one on the left is taken from the account of the Resurrection in Saint John's Gospel. In a light growth of tender green trees is the narrow tomb on the hillside which Joseph of Arimathea gave as a last resting-place to the Crucified One. At the head of the now empty sepulchre the Angel of the Resurrection sits, with outstretched wings. In the foreground kneels Mary Magdalen,— who had greeted the risen Lord, mistaking him for the gardener as he passed by,— she stretches out her hands in an attitude of supplication and prayer as she recognises who it is that she has addressed. The landscape is bathed in the soft, diffused glow of early morning, the hush before even the birds grow noisy is upon the air, the sweetness of a great peace reigns; and the light that is dawning over the hills is typical of the Light which has just risen to be in time the glorious Sun of the new order.

The scene on the right is taken from the last chapter of the

Gospel of Saint Luke, where the three Marys coming to the sepulchre are greeted by two angels in shining garments. Although the time is still early morning, there is here a much brighter light, a more earthly atmosphere, than in the companion picture, the expanse of sky is broken by golden and orange-lined clouds, the open landscape is less suggestive of a holy place. The three women with heavy draperies and head covering, which make rich notes of peacock-blue, dull red, and low-toned pink, stand together, receiving the heavenly messengers. All of the five figures are nearly upon a line in the foreground, and are shown in profile or in three-quarter view.

The two large paintings, *The Nativity* and *The Arrival of the Magi*, in the Church of the Incarnation, New York, were next in order of execution. The night effect is strictly maintained in them; and, in the low rich tones and deep colours there is a mystery of things half seen.

The light is entirely concentrated upon the group of the mother and child in *The Nativity*. They are seen through an open doorway; and Mary, lying upon a low couch, is rising upon her elbow to lift a veil from the sleeping child at her feet. Joseph sits upon the floor; and their garments and coverings, being kept in different shades and tones of white, make a radiant contrast with the darkness out of doors. On the broken pavement outside the humble dwelling stand three supernatural beings with garments of red and shaded blue: above float two angels, making soft notes of tawny white and blue; and all these colours differ but little from the background in tone, and are half absorbed in the night.

The scene of *The Arrival of the Magi*, being entirely out of

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1900, by Curtis & Cameron.

ANGEL OF THE MOON. By JOHN LA FARGE.

doors, is much darker than *The Nativity*, a little of the illumination spreading out from the room being its only light. The arrangement of the figures is remarkably grand. The lines sweep down from the flight of angels in the upper corner, across the riders elevated on their horses, to the angels and the simple old man that kneels in the foreground, making an impression of great majesty, suggesting all the glory of an event that was ministered to by angels, and which a pageant of kings, journeying from the far East, in all the pomp of their rank and circumstance, came to celebrate. The robes of the angels are slightly iridescent blue, a variation of the dark sky; and the kings, clad in deep red, in armour, and in blue-green, with their attendants carrying precious gifts, and a great peacock-green standard,— the symbol of their station,— are like some beautiful old tapestry background, and throw into relief the angelic being in trailing yellow-white garments that will conduct them on.

The narrow windows in the church are filled with such heavy stained glass that but little light filters through them, and the chancel is very dark; and even by artificial light the detail and form in the paintings are much more obscure than the artist intended, and, although the obscurity prevents a close examination of special points, it is not an unbecoming environment for their rich, dim beauty.

Two years later, after a visit to Japan,— which sketches made there and in the South Sea Island and *An Artist's Letters from Japan* have rendered famous,— Mr. La Farge was asked to join a committee with Stanford White and Augustus St. Gaudens, with a view to decorating the Church of the Ascension, New York. In this building the chancel wall is unbroken by

windows, owing to the rectory on the side street being close against it, so that it has an exceptionally fine area for decorative purposes. The result of the committee's deliberation was shown in time, when immediately above the altar was placed a large bas-relief by Louis St. Gaudens, and above that Mr. La Farge's masterpiece, *The Ascension of our Lord.* The word "masterpiece" is used with assurance; for any one that has studied, and can appreciate what went to make up the work of the European masters, and made their names and the periods in which they lived immortal, must feel that here is the shadow of that greatness in religious art which is bemoaned as having passed away.

The composition is arranged in two groups: one, of the ascending Christ amidst the clouds; the other, of the disciples, with Mary, the mother, standing upon the ground and gazing upon the wonder that will soon pass beyond their vision. The landscape in which the scene is set is high and mountainous. The sketches for it were made in Japan, where the artist saw and studied some of the grandest scenery that there is in the world; and, with his insight into the mysteries of atmosphere and colour, he was able to fix upon the canvas the wonderful effect of sky and light which is peculiar to the country, and is considered one of the special beauties of that fascinating land.

Over the magnificent outlines of the mountain tops the clouds come down, half merging them into the unsubstantial sky-world. The reality of earth is mingled with the ethereal and the supernatural; and in this harmony the iridescent robes of the angelic cortège, which circles around the ascending Lord, are as beautifully in keeping as a rainbow in a summer sky. Every tone, every light and shade or note of colour, in

the entire composition tends to focus the interest upon the figure of Christ. He rises above the valley with majestic carriage. The fine large mass of drapery floating from his shoulders adds to the easy poise of his suspended flight. Behind his head a diffused light illuminates the grandeur of the cloud forms, his hand is raised in benediction, he is departing to another

Copyright, 1898, by John La Farge.

ADORING ANGELS. By JOHN LA FARGE.

world, of which the winged host, floating in attitudes of prayer and adoration, but foretell the glory.

Below, in the awe-stricken group of watchers, the artist's brush, still instinct with splendour, has given in the draperies of the clustering men a mass of varied colours, of such rare tones as the long-worn garments of the poor gain from the kindly sun which draws out the crudeness of the dyes.

Before a work of art of such an order as this, analysis may lose its cunning, and criticism need not raise its voice. To understand its spiritual and artistic quality fully is to see be-

yond the gates which creative genius alone can open for common mortals. An artist has done a very great thing for his fellow-men; when he has done this, all that can be given in return is appreciation.

This year was a very busy one for Mr. La Farge, as he also completed the twenty-foot tympanums of *Music* and of *The*

From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1898, by Curtis & Cameron.

IN THE CHURCH OF THE PAULIST FATHERS, NEW YORK CITY.

Drama in the music-room of the residence of Whitelaw Reid, Esquire. In these, fair women clad in rich stuffs, draped in imitation of the present fashions (without their ugliness), read, dance, and play upon musical instruments in most delightful gardens.

Mr. La Farge's fame as a landscape painter was established before the decorative beginning was made, and he can scarcely paint an uninteresting or conventional outdoor background. These scenes are extraordinarily lovely. In *Music* especially the overhanging trees and the play of light and shade on the

uneven ground, the rocks and shrubs and little waterfalls, make, with the quartette of handsome women, an ensemble as harmonious as the strains of a symphony wherein the tones of many instruments are blended.

This closes the list of Mr. La Farge's important early work, though he has also designed and superintended the decoration of several rooms and galleries in the New York residence of Cornelius Vanderbilt, Esquire, and of the Brick Church, New York, the Congregational church, Newport, Rhode Island, and a church at Portland, Maine. The two former are without mural paintings: the latter has a small altar-piece.

II. THE MURAL PAINTINGS OF WILLIAM MORRIS HUNT

With the building of the State Capitol at Albany, New York, a step forward in the interest of our subject was taken by the action of Lieutenant-Governor Dorsheimer. For a number of years the Capitol had been in progress of erection; and, although in 1875 it had absorbed five millions of the public money, the walls had been raised only to the middle of the third story. Then murmurs began against such an extravagant outlay; and an investigating committee was formed, of which Mr. Dorsheimer was the chairman. Looking at the matter from the present point of view, it seems extraordinary that this committee was formed, solely with the idea of suggesting economical measures and changes that would result in curtailing expenses, and not at all with the aim of reforming or improving the design. That it could be altered for the better, artistically, never seems to have entered any one's head, the public at that time evidently taking its architecture blindly, and accepting the fact of its hideous ugliness in a contented spirit. But not so Mr. Dorsheimer, who seems to have been the first person that gave the plans a careful and intelligent examination, and, finding that they showed the most extraordinary ignorance of any architectural order, he made an indignant protest against anything so undesirable, rousing sufficient interest to gain the point of taking further advice before continuing the work, and, if necessary, placing it in entirely different hands.

The original capitol commissioners had been chosen more on account of their qualities of fortune or influence than for their knowledge of the subject in hand; and one of the reasons given for their acceptance of the favoured drawings was that it was indorsed by leading citizens. Mr. Dorsheimer saw the mistake of all this, and insisted upon expert criticism and assistance, and formed an advisory board of professionals, consisting of Frederick Law Olmsted, Leopold Eidlitz, and H. H. Richardson.

The investigations of these gentlemen, and the answers to the questions put to them, were published in a report, which showed how objectionable the edifice would be, from the point of view of art as well as that of the expense, and proving the structure defective and inconvenient as a building in which to transact the public business.

This led to an abandonment of the original plans, and Mr. Eidlitz and Mr. Richardson were empowered to complete the work. The task was a hampered and trying one, for the dimensions of the building were unalterable unless the thick walls were razed; and, this not being feasible, the part already built had to remain as it was. Indeed, all that could be done to the exterior was to carry out the upper tier of windows without making too great a contrast with those already finished, and to sweep away the collection of forms which were to break out at the top story. The list of these forms included eight small copper-covered domes after the manner of Sir Christopher Wren, round metal dormers, Greek pediments, Louis XIV. pavilions, ornamented with cast-iron festoons and balustrades, and iron crestings in every place that they could be put; and the architects endeavoured to replace this chaos with simple,

dignified lines, that should redeem, as far as possible, the unalterable defects of the lower part of the pile.

The interior, not having advanced beyond the positions of the rooms and corridors, gave more scope for improvement; yet changes were not made without raising the opposition of the partisans of the first plan.

It is amazing to read in the records of the time of the excitement created because Mr. Richardson did not confine himself to the style already employed; and there was a great upheaval of the architectural world, which, joined to objections made from other motives, influenced the legislature to pass regulations which added more difficulties to those already in the way of the intended changes. Although under these conditions the work of the reforming architects could be at best but scarcely successful patching, yet the effort was important, and has been dwelt upon at this length because it marked an artistic advance in government and municipal building, which up to that time had been entirely controlled by political and commercial interest.

Farther than this, the occasion was one of particular importance to us, as the order that Mr. Eidlitz gave William Morris Hunt, of Boston, for two mural paintings for the Assembly Chamber, was the first commission for the decoration of a public edifice which had been given to an artist of ability.

Mr. Hunt occupied a most distinguished position. He was a very well-known and popular figure in the city of his residence, and wherever outside of it there were people interested in painting, and of sufficient liberality to understand the strong and noble doctrine of art that he preached, the broad style in which he worked, and his laudation of the contemporary

French school. He especially admired Jean François Millet, several of whose canvases he purchased and brought to this country, and was instrumental in creating an appreciative public for this artist, and other gifted Frenchmen, whose names are now familiar to every cultivated person, but who were, indeed, novel and revolutionary at a time when the Hudson River School flourished. Mr. Hunt had had remarkably fine advantages when a young man, having had a long residence in Europe, and no stint to his opportunities for travelling, and visiting the celebrated galleries. He was a most enthusiastic admirer of Couture, in whose atelier in Paris he had worked until he had so absorbed his master's style that the pupil's studies were mistaken for those of the more celebrated hand. Although this imitation ceased with the student period, the breadth, the tone, the warm colouring, always characteristic of Mr. Hunt's style, recalls this early influence, which, absorbed by his fine talent, had gained merits all his own.

Let us not forget what his generation — and those which have followed — owe to this generous and noble-minded prince of gentlemen and painters. His influence was always used for the promotion of true, beautiful, and worthy ideas. He was the constant friend, consoler, and patron of those less fortunately placed in worldly circumstances than himself, and was ever ready to impart for the benefit of others whatever his rich experience had taught him. His large number of pupils and circle of friends adored him. This sympathetic temperament undoubtedly interfered, with concentrated application at his own easel, and prevented the completion of many canvases; and his finished accomplishment has suffered severely from the evils of careless preservation, so that it is not possible to-day

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1898, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE FLIGHT OF NIGHT. By WILLIAM MORRIS HUNT.

to see his reputation in the magnitude in which it appeared during his lifetime, when his undoubted gifts, his magnetism, and his enthusiasm for his profession and his fellow-workers commanded the admiration of all that knew him.

Mr. Hunt saw in this order for the Albany Capitol the realisation of a long-cherished dream; for, during his successful career as a painter of portraits and easel pictures, he had always been ambitious to become a decorator. He was now over fifty years old, and hesitated over the offer, doubting his powers and fearing his inexperience. For some time he remained in a state of indecision, until his friends succeeded in urging him to an acceptance.

As long before as 1846 Mr. Hunt had made some sketches, inspired by a translation from a Persian poem, which described the Oriental queen of night, Anahita, driving across the heavens in her chariot, and had never quite abandoned the subject, turning to it again and again, making studies for the figures, casts for the horses, et-cetera. In 1872 he had nearly completed the composition on a fifty-foot canvas when the great fire of Boston reduced his studio to ashes; and all that remained to remind him of the picture was a small photograph, a plaster model of the horses, and a sketch of a mother and child that were cradled in the clouds at one side of the central figure. The commission for the Albany Capitol gave Mr. Hunt the chance of repainting this favourite theme, and with the meagre remains of his former studies he began the work of reconstruction.

The second decoration was also a revival of an early idea, for in Mr. Hunt's student days he had made a sketch of Columbus on the ocean, sustained by attending spirits, which was now amplified into *The Discoverer*. The order for the paintings —

which were to be fifteen by forty-five feet in size — was given in June, 1878; and they were to be completed in December. Several months were to be given to preliminary studies, as Mr. Hunt wished to paint directly upon the walls of the room. The scaffolds enabling him to do it were to be erected about the first of September; but, through one of the delays unavoidable in such a great architectural undertaking, they were not completed until so much later that the actual painting was done in about two months.

It is usually the custom of mural painters of the present day to work on large, carefully prepared canvases, which, when completed, are taken off the stretchers, rolled up, and transported to the destination, where they are fastened in place by being rolled flat upon the wall or ceiling, which has been covered with a thickness of white lead and varnish; this method being commended for durability, since the cracking of plaster and the extremes of heat and cold cause decay and ruin. Although plain surfaces lend themselves most readily to a surface of canvas, experiments are continually being tried in Paris with a view to conquering the difficulties of the dome, and by careful goring make whole canvases that will fit exactly into a concave shape. Mr. Hunt, however, would not consider any such modern way. He felt that a wall painting belied its name unless it was an absolute part of the wall, and insisted upon carrying out his work according to the traditions of the Italian frescoists. The Assembly Chamber is lined with creamy sandstone; and he made experiments with colours upon pieces of this stone sent him by the architect, and submitted them to severe tests of cold, so that he felt assured that nothing could alter his pictures, but that they would last as long as the room existed.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1898, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE DISCOVERER. By WILLIAM MORRIS HUNT.

But this was a great mistake; for the great pile in settling proved to have been so poorly constructed that the walls fell out of plumb, tottering pillars had to be propped with wooden beams and ceilings supported by iron girders, and his work suffered in the general destruction. Had Mr. Hunt painted upon canvas, it would have been possible to have taken the decorations down; and, even though they had remained for years rolled up and stored in one of the attics, undoubtedly with the growth of interest in such matters the time would have come when the public would have demanded their restoration to an honourable place. But under the circumstances their fate was sealed. The walls on which they were painted had to be braced to support the straining roof. In ten years after they were finished, they had vanished from sight, owing to changes which were absolutely necessary to preserve the building.

The writer's period of mature judgment does not date back to the time when the paintings were to be seen; but every effort has been made to construct a correct idea of them from sketches, studies, and contemporary opinion.

There is a grandeur and spirit about *The Flight of Night* — this name was substituted for the Persian one — that awakens enthusiasm even for a small sketch; and on the final large scale it must have been exceedingly impressive. In the foreground three galloping horses, black, white, and bay, led by a nude man carrying a torch, were dragging forward a mass of purplish-gray cloud, shaped to the form of a throne, upon which was seated the Goddess of Night. Behind her shone the crescent moon. On one side the cloud formed itself into a hollow, wherein slept a mother and child, with grey robes

harmonising with the cloud. The suggestion of a canopy over them was upheld by a cherub. The fine sweep of the lines of composition, the spirited action of the rearing and galloping steeds, with their silhouettes cutting against the sky, the uses of large masses of light and shade, the colour, which is said

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1898, by Curtis & Cameron.

DETAIL FROM THE FLIGHT OF NIGHT. By W. M. HUNT.

to have been softly grey, touched with brilliant tones to prevent a leaden effect, with the broad handling which was Mr. Hunt's method even in a small compass, brings a picture before the mind's eye which must have been one of the finest examples of this interesting artist's style; and its untimely fate cannot be deplored too greatly.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1898, by Curtis & Cameron.

FORTUNE (Detail from The Discoverer). By WILLIAM MORRIS HUNT.

The Discoverer was in a low, quiet key of falling twilight. Columbus, a tall, black figure in the centre, was a dark note amid the soft, neutral tints of sea and sky, from which the afterglow of sunset had almost faded. Before him swam Faith, and Hope clung to the prow of the boat, while Science held a scroll at the traveller's feet, and Fortune stood at the helm. In the original study the fine conception of winged Fortune, with the large drapery twisted about her upraised arm and blown out sail-fashion, was much higher on the canvas, and was more pleasingly composed with the explorer's figure than in the final painting, where, in order to give the buoyant movement of the boat rising on the swell of the wave and to fit the figures to the shape of the arch, Fortune was placed much lower, leaving the Discoverer unpleasantly detached and awkwardly top-heavy in the tiny craft. Despite this, however, which is very noticeable only on comparison with the finer proportions of the sketch, many persons considered this painting superior to *The Flight of Night*, the very noble types of womanhood shown in the figures of Faith, Hope, and Fortune probably accounting for this popularity. When at the opening of the legislature the paintings were unveiled, the admiration excited by them was so great that a scheme was put on foot to have the artist spend a number of years — perhaps the rest of his life — in Albany, devoting his entire time to decorating the Assembly Chamber. Mr. Hunt was fired with enthusiasm at the thought, and began an enormous plan which was to include two panels of his favourite subject, Niagara Falls, many figures symbolising commerce, education, agriculture, law, et-cetera, and compositions showing the various labours upon which architecture depends, the picturesque aspects

of these having impressed him upon seeing the builders and architects at work while his painting was going on.

The legislature voted a hundred thousand dollars for the purpose, and the artist's letters to his family and friends were rapturous over what seemed the great opportunity of his life. But, when the bill went before the Governor for signature, he used his power of veto, as he did not feel that he could take the responsibility of appropriating such an enormous sum for the purpose; and when the general lack of interest in art, at the time, is taken into consideration, and the dissatisfaction caused by the millions already squandered on the Capitol, it seems almost impossible that an official that valued the public favour could have decided otherwise. Looking back now upon the unfortunate history of the part completed, Governor Robinson's action probably served the cause of art; for, had so great a sum been spent for paintings which would soon have been destroyed by leaking windows and props of wood and iron, the scandal might have been such as to prevent later advancement by the government.

But, although at this date it is easy to reason philosophically about the matter, the veto was a terrible blow to Mr. Hunt, who was inconsolable. His death occurred not long after, so that he was saved the pain of knowing of the brief existence of *The Flight of Night* and *The Discoverer*.

All that remains now of his high hopes and of the most important effort of his life are a few sketches and studies scattered in various places,— melancholy remnants, indeed; and one cannot help feeling that the genial artist who brought help and comfort to Jean François Millet in his dark hours of poverty, and to many another struggling fellow-worker, deserved better treatment at the hands of Fate.

III. EARLY PROGRESS IN THE ART.

Between the time when Mr. La Farge and Mr. Hunt made their brilliant entrance upon this new field and the year of the Columbian Exposition at Chicago,— which proved, as will be shown later, to be a turning-point in the development of the art of Mural Painting and of the public interest in it,— although occasionally a few panels or a single ceiling would be included in the plans for a costly building, the whole tale of all that was accomplished is a very short one. The departure was not regarded as the commencement of a new movement, but as something extraordinary, which owed its success to peculiar genius and a fortunate conjunction of circumstances, and would probably be confined to the two artists in question.

Photographs of the drawings and cartoons for the paintings in Trinity Church and the Albany Capitol hung in the art schools, and were owned by a very few persons with decidedly artistic tastes, who looked upon them with something of the awe with which the works of the Old Masters are regarded; and the keenest critic or student of the times, the artists themselves, never dreamed that the great artistic future lay here, and that the reputations then being made by easel pictures would vanish in a few years before the fame of their decorations.

Many of the men who are now prominent will confess that this was the hidden ambition which they never expected to realise, just as Mr. Hunt treasured the wish through his long life, and could scarcely believe his good fortune when his

hopes were finally given the opportunity to materialise. For it was but natural that artists that had travelled abroad, or, even if they had been obliged to stay at home, yet were acquainted with the history of their profession, would distrust themselves and their era, and feel that mural painting belonged to the giants of more heroic ages, and that the hope of rivalling or even imitating them could scarcely be indulged. And, though the time was one of extreme discouragement, yet it is not entirely without interest, because within the period a few of our most distinguished decorators set out upon the path upon which they were to continue with gain to themselves and the public.

Of those that assisted Mr. La Farge at Trinity Church, Francis D. Millet was best known by his easel pictures, his opportunities for decoration having been few. Francis Lathrop, soon afterward executed several ambitious compositions which were placed in prominent positions, one of which was a panel above the stage in the Metropolitan Opera House. Almost all of these paintings were destroyed, either by fire or by necessary repairs and alterations. Mr. Lathrop is now highly esteemed as an artist-decorator, in the more strictly commercial sense of the word.

George W. Maynard first followed his master with the panels containing figures of Moses and David, in St. James's Church, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, and then turned his attention to working in the Pompeian style, with which he is now identified, and which he has carried to a high degree of perfection. These slender, classical figures, with short gowns showing rounded limbs and floating hair around their pretty faces, are delightful revivals of the graceful Roman art, and have met with

great appreciation. Among the large number of commissions that he has been called to execute have been *The Ballet* and

From the Artist's Original Sketches

THE BALLET AND THE CHORUS. By GEORGE W. MAYNARD.

The Chorus at the side of the stage in the Metropolitan Opera House, afterward destroyed by fire, and panels for the house of William Rockefeller, Esquire, at Tarrytown-on-the-Hudson, for

the Hotel Ponce de Leon, St. Augustine, Florida, and the Imperial and Plaza Hotels, New York.

In this connection Frederic Crowninshield must always be respectfully remembered as one that had given the subject very serious study, and was thoroughly familiar with its brilliant history and traditions, and who both by his own work and

From the *Century Magazine*, by permission.

THE BOWLING GREEN.

by writing did much to raise the standards of opinion in this country.

Edwin H. Blashfield's first decoration was a ceiling in the New York residence of Hamilton McK. Twombly, Esquire. This is composed in three panels. In the large central one *Morning* is borne through the air on a bed of roses by a flock of cherubs. She holds a lyre, upon which she strikes the notes

that dispel the clouds of night before her. In the side panels are attendant figures, one a handsome dark beauty, with a swirling mantle wrapped about her classic robe, who scatters flowers as she floats upward. The other, helmeted and bearing a lance in her hand, holds a shield between her face and the clouds that she is challenging.

Copyright, 1895, by the Century Company.
By EDWIN A. ABBEY.

Henry Siddons Mowbray began with a small painting, *The Month of Roses*, for the New York Athletic Club, Travers Island; Edwin A. Abbey, with the *The Bowling Green*, in the Hotel Imperial, New York. The picturesqueness of costumes, arrangement, and accessories that was afterward to make the success of *The Quest of the Holy Grail* in the Boston Library is shadowed forth in this pleasing canvas, which shows a scene

Reproduced by permission from *Harper's Weekly*. Copyright, 1901, by Harper & Brothers.

NIGHT, DAY, AND DAWN. CEILING BY T. W. DEWING.

during the Dutch occupation of Manhattan Island. In the background is the river bordered by steep-roofed houses, and in the foreground a number of burghers have relaxed their dignity upon this pleasant spring day and are playing a game of bowls.

The unfulfilled desire for mural painting was turned in the direction of the decorative easel picture, which was a marked feature of the exhibitions of the period. Will H. Low was one of the most notable adherents to this style, and he always speaks with gratitude of the inestimable benefit that he derived from his working for and with Mr. La Farge in 1880-81. He also made numerous projects and sketches on his own account, though none of these reached completion until more than ten years later.

Thomas W. Dewing's early pictures had the appearance of fine mural paintings complete and perfectly finished in a small compass. One of them, inspired by Emerson's poem of *The Days*, for beauty of colour and composition, for elegance of drawing and rare æsthetic feeling, dwells in the memory as a model of style. The ceiling in the café of the Hotel Imperial, New York, was his first large undertaking. In the centre of its circle are grouped the figures of *Night*, *Day*, and *Dawn*. Behind them is a pale blue sky with soft mellow clouds toward the circumference, and others lightly passing across the space, the cloud effect giving the idea of the action of the figures, which is the gentlest floating motion, the lower part of their draperies fading away, so that they are absorbed into the clouds. *Night*, a brunette with black hair, wears a robe of violet-grey; fair-haired *Day*, one of pale green; and her blond sister *Dawn's* is warm pink. *Day* sits in the lap of *Night*, who clings to *Dawn's* hand, though there is a most delicate suggestion that *Dawn* is loosing her hold, and will soon leave them. The colouring makes an impression of fluctuating opalescence, and the painting is characterised by the elegance and beauty which distinguished the artist's pictures.

IV. THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION

A point has now been reached where the enormous reserve of artistic strength in the country was suddenly brought out by the demands and requirements of the time; and the splendid vigour of youth, which is as marked in nations as in individuals, was shown by the rapid development of hitherto unsuspected talents, that swept all impediments before them, and realised their ideal in a first triumphant effort. With the highest appreciation of the work that has been considered in the preceding chapters, it must be admitted that as yet mural painting had awakened no very great enthusiasm. Artists, architects, and a small circle of travelled persons, to whom wall pictures in the old country were a familiar sight, constituted the body of those that admired or even recalled the existence of the art in this country. But now the subject became of national importance, and the interested public grew from hundreds to millions. Newspapers and magazines were illustrated with drawings and cartoons of the decorations, and items concerning progress at the seat of labour were constantly reported. For at Jackson Park near Chicago, in the summer of 1892, a band of men were fighting out the question whether American artists had talent sufficiently broad and strong to carry them to successful achievement in this most important field, or whether, sinking back on the excuses of our lack of traditions, our inexperience, and limitations of temperament, we should have to condone a high-spirited effort that ended in failure, and, admitting that the time

was not yet ripe, leave our decorations — if we were ever to have any — to the genius of coming generations. The way the problem was solved is now a matter of history. From this occasion, which was the first great opportunity offered a number of artists where architecture, sculpture, and painting could work together, dates a development in the fine arts, and in the taste for them, which has already borne rich fruit, and which promises to extend beyond any limits that can be foreseen.

The memory of the whole Exposition will remain as an evidence of the devotion to the ideal, which is as distinctly American as a turn for mechanics. Our foreign brethren had decided already just what the aims of the architects would be and the lines on which the buildings would be planned. They looked forward to triumphs of invention more hideous than the unsightly Eiffel Tower that destroys the beautiful sky-line of Paris, and expected to see gigantic packing-boxes made of iron and stucco in imitation of sky-scraping apartment houses and office buildings. They thought that our imaginative faculties would turn toward minarets and steeples curiously constructed out of steel, and over all this monstrous ugliness the spirit of manufacture and utility would reign supreme, commanding the admiration that is conceded to the locomotive. And what was the reality? Our architects, unaided by experience or precedent, and guided solely by theories and enthusiasm, made on the great waste space allotted to them a fair white vision of palaces that was lovingly named by popular voice *The White City*, *The Fair City*, and *The City of Dreams*, and, calling sadly to mind how short-lived so much beauty must be, since it was doomed to destruction in a few months, *The Vanishing City*. Nothing like it was ever seen before or is likely to be seen again. The vast-

ness of the undertakings, the great spaces that were roofed over or made to blossom as the rose, the wealth of money that was poured out unstintingly, is like some old tale of fairy palaces built by magic. The creation was a fairy tale in fact, which the imagination of a body of architects, with *Beaux-Arts* training behind them, told in iron and plaster for the delight and edification of the world. Before even the foundations were laid, these men by common agreement made their plans in such a relation to one another, and to the environment, that effective grouping should be a certainty. And who that saw the result will ever forget the harmony of the vast yet ethereal edifices that stood about the great lagoon, as though conjured there from a dream of classic beauty? What pictures their long reflections made in the water,— the broad flights of marble steps leading up from the brink, the terraces with the balustrades overtopped by masses of flowers, and the gleam of majestic rows of pillars and extended courts rising to fine outlines of domes and arches against the greenery beyond! This is not the place to dwell upon special buildings or notable features that have no direct bearing upon our subject; but, taken as a whole, they were not more wonderful as an artistic achievement than as an example of the spirit of co-operation that had brought the architects from many cities, working together with a common purpose, and this, the moving spirit that lay beneath the great plan of the whole exhibition, was carried into its smallest details.

The administrative body that had transmitted this influence to the architects pursued the same course when the ornamentation of the buildings and grounds was brought into question. The intention of having one artist of the highest

reputation that would superintend the general plan of decoration, select those of his fellow-artists that were best fitted to carry out the work, and have a supervision over the progress of affairs, was carried out by nominating Augustus St. Gaudens to take charge of the department of sculpture, and Francis D. Millet of the mural paintings. As Mr. St. Gaudens's reputation is paramount, no other sculptor could have been suggested for the place; and, while Mr. Millet held no such superiority over the mass of painters, his preferment was a particularly happy one, as he is gifted with wide sympathies and most catholic tastes, so that his fellow-workers were chosen without bias and with a judgment that in almost every case proved to be far-sighted. Since the amount of detail to be attended to required more attention than one person could possibly bestow, Charles Yardley Turner was associated with him as assistant.

The cheerfulness with which Mr. Millet faced his position recalled the episode of his youth when he was a war correspondent, because, while Mr. St. Gaudens had at his command sculptors of all ranks ready to do his bidding, Mr. Millet had no such body to call upon,—the number of decorators required did not exist,—and was obliged to make his own working corps. His judgment was in favour of selecting a number of artists of a good rank, and, whether experienced or inexperienced, putting them to work, and letting them show what was in them; for in this way the old wall paintings had come into existence, and he knew of no better way than to follow such an excellent precedent. Choice was made of J. Alden Weir, Edwin Blashfield, George W. Maynard, Robert Reid, Charles S. Reinhart, Carroll Beckwith, Edward Simmons,

Kenyon Cox, Gari Melchers, W. De Leftwich Dodge, and Walter McEwen to undertake the work. In reading over these names, it is a tribute to the broad governing spirit of the management of the Exposition that desired the best results, regardless of any political or local distinctions, that these men were called upon solely because of their artistic ability, and were almost all from the East.

Excepting Messrs. Blashfield and Maynard, all were novices. Most of them were well past their third decade, and had thus far gained their fame by their easel pictures; and by this change they were now confronted not only with Herculean labours and many vexatious complications, but with what might prove in case of failure a most mortifying incident in their honourable records. Considerable imagination was required to turn from the scale of a small picture to that required for a dome of the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building. Some idea of the vastness of the space is recalled by the fact that the great roof which supported the eight domes was three times as large as St. Peter's at Rome; and, from the nature of the concave surfaces to be decorated, the painting could not be done on canvas and then stretched in place, but had to be executed directly on the plaster at a tremendous height from the floor, with scaffoldings and ladders forming a vantage-ground for the artists and their assistants. The proportions of everything were so enormous that Mr. Blashfield made a sketch showing one of the painters at work in his dome, the great allegorical figures that his hand had created dwarfing him into the size of a pygmy.

It is small wonder that at first some of those that had been selected for the undertaking felt themselves quite unable to

cope with it; but, when once Mr. Millet had really gained his cause and the first start was made, there was no turning back, however much inward quaking there may have been.

It was an interesting assembly that gathered in Jackson Park that summer. The painters, sculptors, and their assistants made a large number, all told; and they were almost all acquainted before this meeting; while many of them had studied together in Paris, and were intimate friends. Moreover, since they were obliged to reside there for several months, those that were married were accompanied by their wives; and these ladies were a delightful addition to the community. Most of the artists lived near the grounds, so that they could go to and fro without any great expenditure of strength; and often, when the labour of the day was over, a distinguished company of men and women would gather for conversation and music.

A favourite place of recreation was a small restaurant in the grounds, where the decorators of the White City would gather of an evening; and after dinner, over their pipes, talk would run high over the mural painting and its history, and there would be an exchange of opinions and theories sufficient to make a thick book on æsthetics, besides hints for common advantage about the application of pigments to the plaster surfaces with which they were struggling. Sometimes improvised theatricals or tableaux would be the entertainment, though more often the most interesting art talk, the most brilliant joking, would be silenced while one of the assistants, a sweet-voiced young Irishman, was persuaded to sing his native Irish ballads, of which his audience never tired. Then, when they went home, what a change from the dim, smoky

room, on moonlight nights, when the buildings were lighted into a weird fantasy of ghostly beauty! While the launch carried them homeward over the white waste of water, backward glances would be cast at the vanishing picture that seemed indeed like a city of dreams.

But this is a description of the "beer and skittles" side, which was very unimportant beside the day's work that meant about as many long hours of confined labour as could be gained out of the twenty-four. With the glamour of moonlight gone, the place showed the wild confusion of construction that was going on. It was a vast work-yard that swarmed with labourers. Scaffoldings and derricks stood up in every direction. Large iron arches would be suddenly swung into place as one passed a spot, and pillars as tall as houses would be set up like ninepins by the workmen. The light weight of the "staff,"—a composition invented in France and first used at the Paris Exposition of 1878,—of which all the buildings and sculptured ornament were made, allowed the most seemingly impossible celerity of accomplishment. Staff can be moulded into any form roughly or delicately, and, when fresh, can be altered or sawed apart; and the workmen would be seen taking most remarkable liberties with the great white blocks that glistened like marble, or carrying about heads and fragments of colossal statues, grotesquely unpleasant in such pieces, that would be quickly hoisted into position and fitted together. Indeed, the whole place teemed with rapid mechanical action, in which man, the creating spirit, alone seemed unimportant. The progress toward the ultimate end was, fortunately, not confined to the tasks of the builders and workmen; for, after the first flurry and excitement was over, the artists had settled

down to hours of steady application, and were pressing forward with the same stirring spirit that animated the whole construction. Although, as has been said, the decorations in the domes of the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building were painted directly on the plaster, Messrs. Reinhart, Weir, Cox, Shirlaw, Simmons, Blashfield, Beckwith, and Reid, to whom the work had been apportioned, had also studios where their preliminary studies and working cartoons could be made, this being possible by partitioning off great spaces in the galleries of the Horticultural Building, with stagings erected so that models might be posed in the positions required for the circular compositions. Each artist was also provided with a small plaster model of the dome, so that experiments could be tried with the intended pictures on a reduced scale. We have already spoken of the difficulties of size that had to be surmounted; but no sooner were the cartoons under way than this was found to be but the first of a series of strange new factors that must be taken into consideration.

That mural painting is governed by other principles than those of an enlarged easel picture is admitted by any painter that knows anything about the subject; and, in the entire range of architectural objects, none puts this fact to more effectual proof than the dome, since its curved surfaces which are seen from below present difficulties of perspective and foreshortening that are all its own, and which have to be met by the scientific side of the artist craft, so that the proportions and actions of the figures will present a natural appearance from the angles of sight. There is also a certain carefulness to be observed about the colour, since, if it is in too light a key, it may seem weak and ineffective, and, if it is too dark, will look

like a black hole in the roof. These pitfalls were realised, theoretically at any rate, by these ambitious artists, for most of them had studied in Paris and were familiar with Paul Baudry's triumphs of foreshortening in the ceiling of the foyer at the Opera House, and had also imbibed M. Puvis de Chavannes's ideas of flat colour and breadth of the general effect; and, with these principles for guidance, though the practical application might be difficult, there was hope of final results.

How experimental was the whole scheme was shown by the diverse and original beginning, which all turned out right, however, in the end. Mr. Blashfield out of his wider experience, though much dome-painting had not come even his way heretofore, made an elaborate sketch in colour on an eight-sided canvas which could be used as a working model, and be turned so that each little figure was brought under the great one on the roof; Mr. Beckwith repeated this idea on his small plaster dome; Mr. Simmons made a quantity of bold sketches in oil; Mr. Cox posed his models with care, and made detailed studies of them and of arrangements of drapery; while Messrs. Weir, Reinhart, Shirlaw, and Reid made great cartoons that covered the walls of their ateliers. Indeed, so anxious was Mr. Reid to grapple as soon as possible with the difficulties of proportion that he carried out the idea of making a gigantic cartoon the size of the figures in place; and, when this was completed, it was nailed up in his dome, where it attracted the attention of his fellow-workers, who gathered in a body beneath it, and gained all they could from so practical an object-lesson.

It must be recalled that the domes were situated in pairs over the entrances; and, while there was no distinct plan of subjects between the artists whose work was to be seen side by

side, yet in every case the scale of figures and general management were adapted to each other's desires, with the intention

THE ARMOURER'S CRAFT. By EDWIN H. BLASHFIELD.
(FROM THE ORIGINAL PENCIL SKETCH.)

that the paintings should create an agreeable impression together.

Mr. Blashfield's decoration at the west portal was a great favourite with the public. He solved the problem of filling the great space with a few figures by making the centre of the dome a large circle of sky with a few birds flying across it; and against this, as though they had flown in from the blue above,

were seated in the pentatives four wingèd genii representing *The Arts of Metal-working*, their great white pinions almost touching each other. The *Armourer's Craft* was represented by a stalwart figure arrayed with helmet, sword, and shield; *The Brass-founder* and *The Iron-worker*, by two half-clad youths, one holding an embossed platter, the other a blacksmith's hammer; *The Art of the Goldsmith*, a subject that admitted of more delicacy, was a fair young maiden clad in a clinging mediæval dress of snowy white, which with the great wings made a lovely effect. She held in her hand a small gilded figure, and her attitude was exceedingly graceful. The colour throughout, while delicate in the extreme, was by no means cold, the great masses of white being relieved by peacock blues, greens, and purples; and the space was satisfactorily filled without being crowded, making an impression that was most decorative and pleasingly æsthetic.

Companion to this was Mr. Reinhart's painting, which comprised *Embroidery* working at her frame, *Design* with a drawing-board on her lap and a pencil raised for inspiration, *Decoration* adorning a large jar, and *Sculpture* with a finished statuette beside her. In desiring to make these figures as appropriate as possible to the building and the arches around, Mr. Reinhart drew them seated upon a white marble terrace with a railing which repeated that upon the building itself. At intervals along the top of this balustrade were placed vases filled with cactus and flowering plants silhouetting against a deep blue sky touched with salmon-pink.

At the north portal Mr. Beckwith departed from any classical or conventional idea with spirited types of modern inventions. A stalwart young factory girl in working apron and

From *Scribner's Magazine*, by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE TELEPHONE. By J. CARROLL BECKWITH.

blouse with sleeves rolled up, and smooth hair, seated on a magnet with a revolving wheel at her feet, personified *The Dynamo;* a kneeling figure, with floating hair, holding up the familiar globe of our street lamps, *The Arc Light;* another seated figure at a table reading a book, with the operating machine beside her, *The Morse Telegraph;* while in the fourth *The Indicator* and *The Telephone* were shown under the guise of a robust woman who stood holding a telephone to her ear, while the tape issuing from a ticker behind her made a fanciful ribbon-like decoration around her body. From this quartette, faint lines of wire led up to the centre, where they were held by a winged boy, *The Spirit of Electricity*, who pointed to a blaze of radiating lightning from which the power was drawn.

In the next dome, Mr. Shirlaw, in setting forth *The Abundance of Land* and *Sea*, covered his entire space with a great spider web, with *Silver* and *Gold* poised in the pentatives on great nuggets of precious metal. They were clad appropriately in yellow and in silver grey, while in the opposite corners *Pearl* standing on an oyster shell was adorned with glistening strings of pearls, and *Coral* was decking her hair with a red ornament.

Over the east portal Mr. Simmons, seeking a change from so much symbolism under feminine forms, confined his decoration to the male sex. The centre was occupied by four shields bound together with flowing ribbons, and blazoned *Stone*, *Iron*, *Hemp*, and *Wood*. The youths who with their proper tools and accessories typified these products of nature were decidedly classical in their semi-nudity, and their rugged outlines and feeling of strength gave an impression of boldness and originality.

From *Scribner's Magazine*, by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

PEARL. By WALTER SHIRLAW.

Kenyon Cox, working in harmony with Mr. Simmons, decorated the pentatives each with a female figure standing against a balustrade that crossed from one arch of the building to another, while above their heads broad banderoles bearing the names of the subjects made a curving frame that met the architecture on either side. *Metal Work* was typified by a robust girl, in buff jacket and heavy gown, testing a sword; *Building*, clad in golden-green classical robes, held a carpenter's square, and stood against an unfinished wall; *Ceramics*, with a heavily patterned robe of blue and white, was decorating a vase; and *Spinning*, with rose-coloured garments, gracefully held up a spindle.

Mr. Weir at the south entrance broke his circle by placing between the figures in the pentatives, at the keystones of the arches, cupids holding tablets inscribed *Pottery*, *Painting*, *Decoration*, and *Gold Work*. Mr. Weir's aim was for largeness and simplicity, and his use of flying draperies conveyed a feeling of breadth and accentuated the size of the figures. The general scheme of colour was pale blue, radiating into green and purple, the impressionist's palette that produces wonderful effects of atmosphere and sunshine.

Mr. Reid, his colleague, continued the idea of breaking the outline of the arches by placing cupids bearing great palm branches and tall incense burners on the keystones, and also enlarged his figures by floating draperies. Already in this first effort there was something of the stir of life and picturesqueness that has been carried through his more mature work. One recalls the charm of the white-robed, slim maiden, *Ornament*, seated in one of the pentatives, resting one arm on a pedestal, while she held a piece of carved stone on her knee;

From *Scribner's Magazine*, by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

Engraved by Van Ness.

CERAMIC PAINTING. By KENYON COX.

and *Design*, a very decorative figure in purple. These were balanced by *Metal* and *Textiles*.

Besides the opportunities offered by the domes over the entrances there was at each corner of the building a pavilion which contained two tympanums forty feet long. The pavilions toward the south were given to Gari Melchers and Walter McEwen; and as the place admitted of a painting on canvas that could, when completed, be stretched on the wall, these artists, more fortunate than their brethren in the domes,—who were obliged to take daily aërial flights up scaffoldings and ladders, and who developed chronic cases of crick-in-the-neck from painting upward—were allotted the galleries of the Arts Building to set up their great canvases in. Mr. McEwen chose the subjects *Music* and *Life*. A rich border enclosed the arched spaces; and in *Music* the Muse Euterpe was placed at the feet of a statue of Pallas Athene, making a central group with a young mother and a tiny child who banged joyfully on a tambourine. Piping satyrs occupied one corner near a laurel bush; and a procession with trumpets and musical instruments filled the rest of the composition, the silhouettes telling against the golden reflection of an evening sky. In *Life* the arts that support existence were shown in a bevy of maidens with distaffs, shepherds shearing a sheep, and men working at the loom.

Mr. Melchers, in portraying *The Arts of Peace*, continued the idea of the inspiring statue of a goddess surrounded by symbolical figures. He will be more distinctly remembered by his *Arts of War*, a picturesque procession of warriors returning from a hunt, carrying a deer. An aged chief on a great horse pointed the way; while his followers, blowing horns and

From *Scribner's Magazine*, by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

Engraved by J. W. Evans.

THE TEXTILE ARTS. By ROBERT REID.

waving their staves, seemed as excited by the chase as the dogs that, straining in the leash, required all the strength of their muscular keeper to hold them in check.

Mr. Millet's *Penelope at the Loom* and *The Return of Ulysses* and Lawrence Earle's *Glass Blowers* and *Pottery* were in the north pavilions.

When the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building was opened to the public, there was no stint to the approbation, no words too enthusiastic to express what was felt to be due the artists. They had transformed the temporary lodging for exhibits into a richly adorned palace, and brought a new idea of art into the minds of millions of persons that passed through the great entrances that summer, and stopped to gaze at the skyward pictures.

It is a real pleasure to call to mind the glory of colour, the beauty of thought, the grace of fair womanhood, and the force of manly strength that the artists drew in such a rich pageant for the brief delight of their countrymen. The buildings have vanished, the great wingèd genii and the rest of the gay company of symbolical figures have crumbled into dust with the domes that they adorned; but their influence, more enduring than their outlines, tells still as a vital force in the art of the nation. In the few years that have intervened since the Fair the artists that won such honour in their first engagement have been given opportunities for lasting work, that has shown the power of more finished achievement. But memory loves to linger upon this first effort, because it was the brave response of inexperienced men to the demands made upon them; and it appeals to our patriotism and pride that in his case, as when other draughts upon the untried strength

of the country have been necessary, there has been no doubt of the sincerity of the answer: "We are untrained and unfitted, we are weak and the undertaking is great; but we are ready."

V. THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION. *Conclusion*

Thus far interior decoration alone has been considered; but the architects saw in the great expanses of the white outer walls an opportunity for using colour both in plain fresco and design, and this led to some very interesting exterior work as well. The employment of gay tints about the Court of Honour was most effective. Across the second story of the Administration Building the recessed wall of the loggia was painted red. The projecting roof threw this somewhat into shadow; but the structure was so enormous that even from a long distance the warm tone showed between the rows of columns, making a base for the gleaming whiteness which rose finally to the crowning glory of the gilded dome. And other frescos, either plain or picked out with gold patterns or inscriptions on the surrounding edifices, gave a picturesqueness and gayety to the scene about the lagoon that made the visitor feel as if he had been transported into some colour-loving southern land. The finest occasion for finished artistic work was given to George W. Maynard, whose panels and friezes in the pavilion and porticos of the Agricultural Building added the final distinction to the general effect. In the great front portico he placed on either side of the doorway graceful figures typifying *Abundance* and *Fertility*. Above was a frieze of Greek ornament, embossed with the names of Greek and Roman writers on Agriculture; and on the side walls were large paintings showing Cybele, the mother of all the gods,

seated in a chariot drawn by lions, and King Triptolemus, sent forth in Demeter's car with its team of wingèd dragons, to instruct all the nations of the earth in agricultural knowledge. The elimination of unnecessary detail, which is characteristic of Mr. Maynard's style, the flat-toned backgrounds, the golden chariots, the dragons, the lions, and the pleasing classic figures made a most decorative effect. The fine borders, lettering, et-cetera, which added to the charm, were the labour of Herman T. Schladermundt, Mr. Maynard's assistant.

In the two pavilions at the ends of the building there were panels on either side of the doorway and friezes above them. For one pair of these the artist painted *Spring*, a tripping girl with her apron full of seed, which she was spreading with liberal hand, and *Summer*, with a sheaf of grain under her arm and an antique pitchfork over her shoulder. Their floating figures and lovely heads were sharply outlined against red backgrounds, framed in borders of Indian corn with garlands of fruit above. Across the top of the doorway was the celebrated frieze of animals, which was the object of much popular admiration. Many a farmer passing in or out was attracted by the rendering of fine animals, and would stop to examine the horses and oxen, and scornfully compare the rudimentary ways of cultivating the soil in Roman times with the scientific methods and machinery at his own command.

According to the architect's first plan, which was sent to Mr. Maynard, a large ornament rising high in the centre was to surmount the door; and, owing to this, the artist placed a pair of rampant animals in each frieze, which would show above this architectural feature. The ornament, however, was never put in place, though the decision was not made until the

paintings were so far advanced that they could not be changed. So that, owing to the mistake, the rearing pairs of horses and bulls rose in their places. The frieze divided by this central feature was devoted to scenes of country life. Above *Spring* great oxen were drawing an ancient Roman plough and a cart. Above *Summer* a band of youths mounted on horses were drawing a chariot. The other pavilion repeated the same general plan with panels of *Autumn* and *Winter*, and in the frieze some men working with oxen on one side of the pair of rampant animals and a boy and girl leading a cow and bull on the other. Whether examined close at hand or seen in glimpses from afar, these paintings made a charming impression, and were accounted one of the most interesting features of the decorations.

In the foregoing chapter mention was made of the vast size of the domes in the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, but the colossal dome in the Administration Building dwarfed the proportions of the former into insignificance; for it was two hundred and sixty-five feet high, and lighted by a great eye forty feet in diameter, around which a surface of thirty-five by one hundred feet was covered with a decoration. William De L. Dodge, during the progress of this great undertaking, led a most confined existence, being obliged to climb up some three hundred feet of ladders and scaffoldings every morning, and sometimes not descending to earth again until past midnight, as the work could be continued by electric light after darkness fell. His whole composition was called *The Glorification of the Arts and Sciences*, and showed Apollo, crowned with laurel, seated on a marble throne, and groups of people symbolising the arts and sciences,— the votaries of sculpture

carrying a statue of the Venus of Milo, those of architecture accompanying a model of the Parthenon drawn by wingèd

From *Scribner's Magazine*, by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

AUTUMN. By GEORGE W. MAYNARD.

horses, and others with equally appropriate emblems advancing toward him with gifts and trophies. A great deal of action and spirit was displayed in the drawing of the large number of figures which had to be introduced to fill the space; and this allowed for troops of Roman soldiers, horsemen, rows of

judges, men with musical instruments and flowers, and a crowd of spectators.

The architects of the New York State Building revived in their Italian Renaissance design the taste and wealth of the

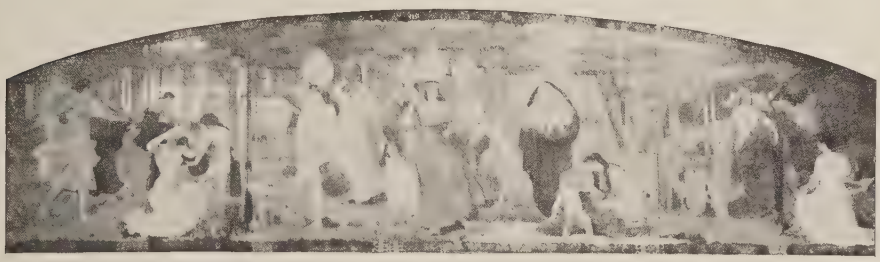
From *Scribner's Magazine*, by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

RIDERS OF WINGED HORSES (Detail). By W. De L. DODGE.

Florentine Republic, and were fortunately able to finish the interior with as little regard for economy as though they had been filling an order for an elaborate civic or private edifice. Interest centred about the banqueting hall, which was decorated, under Mr. Millet's supervision, in cream white and gold, interspersed with harmonious tints where the variation was

appropriate to the architecture. The ceiling, painted by Mr. Millet, represented an allegory of the Empire State. Upon a golden throne amongst the clouds, Juno was seated, holding a staff-like sceptre and a palm branch, significant of peace. Beside her was a peacock, and before her cupids strewed roses; and a procession came to pay her homage, while Music sounded upon her lyre.

The idea of a Woman's Building, designed and beautified entirely by women's hands, a treasure-house for the exhibition



PRIMITIVE WOMAN (Detail). By MARY MACMONNIES.

of their achievement in every branch of employment from lace-work to machinery and inventions, will probably appear as quaint and curious to our descendants as the Courts of Love and the Tournaments of Wit held in the Middle Ages to us. Whatever went to the completion of the other buildings,—architecture, sculpture, painting,—here was the woman's mastery of the same task. In the vestibule the ceiling and side walls were covered with mural paintings; and in the large hallway there were two large tympanums, by Mrs. Mary MacMonnies and Miss Mary Cassatt, and four panels, by Mrs. Amanda Brewster Sewall, Mrs. Lucia Fairchild Fuller, Mrs. Rosina Emmet Sherwood, and Miss Lydia Field Emmet. Mrs. MacMonnies's

panel, *Primitive Woman*, was divided into three scenes. At the right, primitive man — a hunter clad in skins — was surrounded by wives and hand-maidens who ministered to his comfort, and carried away the deer he had brought home. In the centre was a picturesque procession of stalwart women bearing water-jars, making fine silhouettes against the evening sky. In the foreground mothers were bathing their young children. On the left, against a background of trees, water, and distant shore, the sturdy daughters of the soil were ploughing with oxen, while a band of sowers scattered the grain into the new furrows.

Miss Mary Cassatt also separated her space into three parts, enclosing them with a beautiful framework of conventional design and medallions. The subject *Modern Woman* was carried out with the individual force and distinguished methods, by which she dignifies the simplest theme. One panel showed a group of girls in an orchard, another a girl dancing, the third a band of maidens running in happy fashion. Familiarity only with the artist's style can fill this meagre outline to anything approaching the true interest of the compositions.

In the panel spaces Mrs. Sewall painted *The Women of Arcadia*, Mrs. Sherwood *The Republic's Welcome to her Daughters*, Miss Emmet *Art, Science, and Literature*, and Mrs. Fuller *The Women of Plymouth*. The ceiling of the library was the work of Mrs. Dora Wheeler Keith.

When writing this account of what was at best but an experiment, carried out in an entirely inadequate time by artists who in the main took up their brushes in some fear, lest failure should effect their good repute, the desire has been to

Reproduced, by permission, from Harper's Magazine.

Copyright, 1893, by Harper & Brothers.

MODERN WOMAN (SECTION OF TYMPANUM). BY MARY CASSATT.

slight no honest, intelligent effort. Already, so quickly are photographs, illustrations, and drawings destroyed, and writings of the period passed out of print, that the difficulties attending any correct statements and adequate descriptions of the work has been almost as great as though Chicago was in Central

Reproduced, by permission, from Harper's Magazine.—Copyright, 1893, by Harper & Brothers.

DETAIL FROM BORDER OF TYMPANUM. By MARY CASSATT.

Africa, and the affair one of remote antiquity. All the more reason, therefore, for the critic to glean such fragments of truth as are still matters of personal knowledge; for with another generation the details will be so obscure that, although there might be a revival of interest about the matter, it would be quite impossible to collect the data necessary for an authentic account of what has already, in less than ten years, become a matter of hearsay.

The aim has been to preserve this fleeting knowledge; and, although the paintings were naturally not all upon one plane of interest or excellence, yet the most stilted and lifeless performance gains a dignity from its position in an historical point in American art, and was remarkably well done in having been done at all. Later errors and ignorances, making inexcusable blots upon our permanent buildings, may raise a just indignation; but a veil of generosity may be drawn over defects and failures of this endeavour, because it was the forerunner of such very good things.

VI. THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY: PUVIS DE CHAVANNES—ABBEY

It requires some mental effort to realise that our development has been so rapid that only seventeen years have passed between the dismal strivings and failures of the Albany Capitol and the completion of such a perfect building as the Public Library in Boston. A critic might have worked out the change in thirty or forty years, but this is purely the work of Aladdin's lamp. The Capitol was at best but a piece of patchwork that could be regarded with satisfaction only as the first step toward better things; and, when the unsoundness of the structure became apparent, there was little comfort in the minds of those that had been connected with it in any way. The Library is an architectural triumph, perfect, complete, a model of elegance and of that unpretentiousness which is the essence of the finest taste. Moreover, although, when the Library was first built, the public may have been unable to appreciate just how fine a monument the architects had given them, familiarity has brought a better understanding and complete satisfaction. It is now regarded as a civic crown; and scores of persons visit it every day, to gain an idea of the picturesqueness of foreign buildings from the interior court-yard with its fine colonnade, and benches, and green turf, and to guess at the magnificence of palaces as they pass through the splendid halls and rooms, adorned with the richest marble, woodwork, sculpture, and mural paintings. Such an edifice in a great city is a distinct

educational factor, and is of incalculable benefit in raising the public standards. From the time the fine doorways are passed the æsthetic senses are filled with delight by the exquisite proportions, the grandeur of lines, and the fine details of the Entrance Hall, where heavy piers support the mosaic ceiling; and through the great arch at the end of the central aisle rises the broad flight of the steps of the Grand Stairway where M. Puvis de Chavannes's decorations occupy a superb position. The walls surrounding the stairs are sheathed in variegated Sienna marble, so carefully selected that at the arch it is almost pure yellow dotted with different tints, but becomes more deeply veined with black as the stairs are ascended, until, after the landing where the flight divides, the black becomes more predominant until the colours are very evenly balanced, in the slender pillars and balustrade which enclose the Staircase Corridor at the top.

It is on the landing that the best view can be obtained of M. Puvis's eight panels set in the yellow marble casing on a line with the windows; and, looking upward, the large painting on the corridor wall, *The Genius of Enlightenment*, can be seen through the arches.

Before going into a detailed account of the series, it would be well, since the reader may not have had the advantage or possibly may have neglected seeing the decorations by this artist, which France ranks amongst her masterpieces, to throw a little light on the extraordinary genius which has given M. Puvis the distinction of being considered the greatest modern decorator.

Kenyon Cox, in his essay *Puvis de Chavannes*,* has

* *Modern French Masters.* Edited by John C. Van Dyke.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE MUSES WELCOMING THE GENIUS OF ENLIGHTENMENT. By PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

made so careful an analysis of the causes of this superiority that, having read the paper, his clear reasoning remains so vividly in mind that, rather than write an echo of the author's words, it seems best to quote them directly: " . . . He is yet one of the leaders of the young school of to-day," says Mr. Cox, "one of the most living and vital influences of contemporary art, one of the most discussed and criticised of artists. His art is certainly of a sort to be 'caviare to the general.' It has been said to be the negation of everything that has always been counted art, and to be based on the omission of drawing, modelling, light and shade, and even of color. On the other hand, his admirers think him a master of drawing in his own style, and certainly a master of color. To explain these seeming contradictions; to show the reasons of the omissions in his work, which do not arise from ignorance, but are distinctly wilful; to exhibit his qualities, and give a reason for the hearty admiration that many of us feel for him,— this is the difficult task before me."

" To begin with, one must remember that Puvis is above all things a decorator. . . . Go to the Panthéon and look at the mural pictures executed there by many of the foremost of French painters, and I think that you will feel that there is just one of them that looks like a true decoration, exactly fitted for the place it occupies and the architecture that surrounds it; and that one is Puvis de Chavannes's. . . . Puvis's drawing, with all its omissions, is austere and noble; and his pale tints, which have been called the denial of color, look here like the only true color, absolutely in harmony, a part of the building itself, the delicate efflorescence, as it were, of the grey walls. . . . Discarding our modern realism, Puvis has gone back as far

as Raphael. Was it necessary to go further? Simplicity is good; but does it entail so much sacrifice? Perhaps not; for there is more than one way of attaining decorative effect, and Veronese and Raphael were great decorators as well as Giotto. . . . Giotto and Fra Angelico have also had their influence on Puvis; and he has felt, as have so many others, the wonderful effect of their rigidly simple works. . . . The system is capable of abuse, as imitators of Puvis have shown us; and one must be very sincere and very earnest not to make it an empty parody. It is not enough to leave out the unessential: one must have something essential to say. Puvis, at his best, is absolutely grand and absolutely sincere; and, while he sacrifices, it is for the sake of expressing a lofty and pure sentiment in a chastened but all the more effective style. . . .

"A classicist of the classicists, a primitive of the primitives, a modern of the moderns,— Puvis de Chavannes is, above all, an individual and original artist; and to copy his methods would be to learn ill the lesson he teaches. His style is indissolubly bound up with his message: his manner is the only one fit to express what he alone has to say. It would be but an ill-fitting, second-hand garment for another. But let us learn from him that imitation is not art, that the whole is greater than the parts, and that art in service is the freest art and the noblest."

This splendid criticism must find an echo in the thoughts of this master's admirers, and should not fail to modify and instruct the judgment of those that have found it difficult to understand the reasons for his great reputation. When the order from America reached M. Puvis, he was over seventy years old; and this was the first time that he had been called

upon for paintings to go outside of his native land. The trip across the Atlantic was impossible in his state of health, so that, instead of following his usual method of studying with the greatest care the architectural problems of the case, he was obliged to make shift with photographs and measurements, pieces of the marble sheathing which would frame the panels, and a reduced plan of the staircase.

Patches of colour imitating the yellow and black marble were painted at the bottom of the panels,— a device commonly employed by decorators for keeping the whole colour scheme in view; and wooden frames were made similar to the spaces that were to be occupied, so that the canvases could be placed in them from time to time, and thus be kept in relation with their future surroundings.

In the midst of the admiration which the result calls forth, the thought which found its way into the writer's opinion some years ago, when visiting Paris and the provincial towns where M. Puvis's celebrated decorations are to be found, will return to mind,— that the finest period of his development came a little before the time of the Boston series.

In the Hôtel de Ville at Amiens, where the paintings are dated over a period of nineteen years, his gradual eliminations for the sake of decorative effect and the formation of his mature style can be traced from the early *War* and *Peace* (1861) up to the triumph of the *Ludus pro Patria* (1880), which belongs to the glorious company of the series of St. Genevieve in the Panthéon, the hemicycle in the Sorbonne, and *The Sacred Wood Dear to the Hearts of the Muses* at Lyons. But what more natural, indeed, than that this power of expression should wane in the last years of the artist's life, when he was a very

old man, so that his methods seem strained, and the sacrifices that he has made become evident, because the gain falls just

From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY. BY PUVIS DE CHAVANNES.

short of being great enough to cover them? Yet, even although the golden hour was passed when M. Puvis painted the Library series, he was still the greatest modern decorator; and the work bears the impress of belonging to a very high place in the temple of art.

On the staircase, under the general titles of *Science* and *Letters*, Physics, Chemistry, History, Astronomy, Philosophy,

From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

HISTORY AND ASTRONOMY. BY PUVIS DE CHAVANNES.

Pastoral, Dramatic, and Epic Poetry, are represented, the former subject beginning with *Physics* and *Chemistry* on either side of the windows. In *Physics*, M. Puvis portrayed the telegraph in compliment to the country where the use of electricity

has been so wonderfully developed. The familiar pole and wires appear in the lower corner of the canvas, which is divided

From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

PHILOSOPHY AND PASTORAL POETRY. BY PUVIS DE CHAVANNES.

into two nearly equal parts, the upper one showing a fair sea and pleasant sky, across which is flying a fair-haired, white-robed maiden typifying Good News: and the lower, a precipitous mountain and rocky gorge, where floats the grey figure of

Ill Tidings, with her face concealed in her hand. The colours throughout the eight panels are faint and grey, making a pale

From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

DRAMATIC POETRY AND EPIC POETRY. BY PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

harmony with the rich yellow marble; yet the character of each subject is so finely considered, the variation of tints is so well planned, that there is no monotony in the whole effect.

The presiding deity of *Chemistry* stands in a niche fash-

ioned out of a cliff that rises high above her head. Before her is a crucible, and wingèd boys share the interest with which she watches an experiment.

History is a remarkably fine conception. She stands, a majestic, classical figure, in the midst of a ruined place, where bushes have grown between the stones of what was once a masterpiece of man's building. Her hand is raised to evoke the spirit of the past, but there is no answer from the desolation. Yet is this sad and stately Muse not entirely forsaken: a nude youth holding the book and torch of Science stands beside her. The lofty type of the female figure is profoundly impressive, and the hillside crowned by tall cypresses calls to mind what a magnificent landscape M. Puvis can paint when he thinks it best for his purpose; for who that has seen them can forget the great landscape decorations in the Hôtel de Ville at Paris, or the view of Rouen and the islands of the Seine, which forms the background of *Inter Artes et Naturam*, in the Museum at Rouen, painted with an art that alone would have made him famous?

Astronomy is typified by the Chaldean shepherds. Two nearly nude men are gazing at the heavens, and a woman is looking out of a small, wattled hut near by. The primitive treatment of the theme, like that of the *Poor Fisherman* in the Luxembourg, is saved from being ridiculous only by the artist's wonderful genius. No one else could have painted it with dignity. As it is, it takes a place in the whole decorative scheme, much as one piece of mosaic fitted against another may need to be dull and unnoticeable to complete the pattern properly.

Here the divisions of Science are brought to an end, and the

four remaining panels are devoted to Letters. *Philosophy* shows an Athenian garden, where Plato talks with one of his disciples in the foreground, standing on a broad marble walk, which outlines a plot of grass and flowers. Behind, under a white portico and colonnade, other men are reading and conversing. Afar off above a wood rises a vision of the Parthenon on the Acropolis. The arrangement of the masses of white architecture, the view of the Parthenon standing in ideal majesty, the relieving greenery, and the group of the philosopher and his pupil, to which the interesting surroundings are quite subordinate, compose a scene in which the very spirit of classicism seems to dwell.

In the first of the three panels devoted to poetry the solitary figure of Virgil stands leaning against a slender young tree, which with its companions delicately leafing out at the top make a light screen across the sky. The place is one of idyllic loveliness. The blue waters of the ocean have cut into the level shore, making shallow inlets that reflect the rocks and trees. In the extreme foreground are two primitive beehives. An atmosphere of peace, to be found only far from the thickly settled abodes of men, rests upon the placid summer air.

Beside it *Dramatic Poetry* seems stronger and more positive, though this is from the masterly treatment of the grander subject; and there is really very little difference in the tone and colour. In the midst of the sea that fills all the central space stands the jagged rock upon which Prometheus, enduring horrible torture, is bound. The consuming vulture soars above him; and, moved by the victim's distress, the fair white Oceanides are rising from the waves, and float in the air about him, chanting soothing melodies. On a cliff in

the foreground Æschylus is writing his immortal tragedy. The composition displays the artist's finest powers; for in it he has rendered one of the most horrible tragedies ever conceived by the imagination, yet without condescending to brutal or realistic methods, but with a restraint that is entirely in accordance with the canons of the highest art.

The last of the series is now reached in *Epic Poetry*, where blind Homer sits by the wayside, and two female figures, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, stand beside him with laurel wreaths in their hands. Though quite acceptable among its companions, it does not particularly engage the attention.

The construction of the Staircase Corridor enabled the artist to have a choice of design; for the long wall presented a surface broken exactly in the middle by a door, and the supports of the vaulting, which are placed a little higher than the top of this entrance, divide the upper part of the space into five arches, so that five separate panels could be used, or a single decoration cover the whole. M. Puvis chose the latter, carrying a sweep of sky across the arches; and, by placing beside the fine, severely-designed doorway seated figures of *Study* and *Contemplation*, he dignified it into a pedestal for the *Genius of Enlightenment*, a winged boy who stands upon a cloud, holding blazing lights in his hands. Just below the arches is an expanse of sea; and there are fine lines in the hillside which fills the foreground,— lines that dip and bend and are as individual as the lines of a portrait. The place is a most pleasant one, full of young, thickly-leaved trees, of small bushes, and irregular green growth,— fit playground for the Muses who rise (four on one side, five on the other) like a flight of white butterflies. The perfect balance of the groups, their simplicity and the

harmony of the separate figures with one another, is suggestive of some exquisite piece of music, simple enough for any musician to read at sight, but which taxes the powers of the finest

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

DETAIL FROM THE MUSES.

players to interpret in all its subtle beauty. The whole painting is so absolutely decorative that it might well have grown upon the wall, and from its pure fidelity to standards which have no touch of cleverness or of aught superficial or common leaves a conviction that, however unlike these creations of the

Copyright, 1900, by John Elliott.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1901, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE TRIUMPH OF TIME. By JOHN ELLIOTT.

Copyright, 1900, by John Elliott.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1901, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE TRIUMPH OF TIME. By JOHN ELLIOTT.

modern French artists are to the grand Muses of Hellas, yet they are really the same. They, too, carry the air from Olympus. They have come from that high world which, were all minds great enough, all hearts and eyes true and pure enough, the whole world might see, but that the majority can surmise only through the translated visions of poets and artists. The corridor is connected with the large rooms at the sides by small square passages, called the Venetian and Pompeian Lobbies. The first, decorated by J. Lindon Smith, is suggestive of Venetian art and influence; and the rather elaborate plan has been carried out with much attention to picturesque details of gilding, lettering, Byzantine plaques, mediæval galleys, et-cetera. Over the door two boys are holding formal garlands of fruit and flowers, and there is a painting of The Wedding of Venice to the Adriatic above the window. In the Children's Reference Room beyond there is a new ceiling showing *The Triumph of Time*, by John Elliott.

The Pompeian Lobby owes its name to Elmer E. Garnsey's charming Pompeian designs. The walls are covered with panels of red bordered with arabesques, and bands of slate colour sprinkled with bunches of hyacinths. The domed ceiling is blue, and adorned with classic medallions. Seahorses and masks are other appropriate ornaments, and the interest centres upon a small panel showing Bacchus pouring wine from a horn into a cup.

This passage leads into the Delivery Room, which is adorned by Mr. Abbey's frieze of *The Quest of the Holy Grail*, the third of the celebrated achievements which, with those of M. Puvis de Chavannes and Mr. Sargent, give the Library decoration its prestige. Mr. Abbey's work is on very different

artistic lines than those of the others of the trio; for the decorative canons and limitations which M. Puvis observes to the

Copyright, 1900, by John Elliott. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1901, by Curtis & Cameron.

DETAIL FROM THE TRIUMPH OF TIME. BY JOHN ELLIOTT.

point of straining, and Mr. Sargent uses so easily that their existence is not even suggested, do not enter very largely into Mr. Abbey's plans. The frieze is perhaps best described as being a series of most admirable pictures, painted in a realistic way; and, though not even the backgrounds take their

place in a decorative sense, yet in itself it is so successful — for the beauty and charm is as undeniable as the interest it excites, that having expressed what any knowledge of art must teach (that it is essentially pictorial, not decorative) — there is no necessity for harping upon the strain, and the attention can be turned to admiring and appreciating what the artist has given in the way he thought best to give it. It would be absurd to expect an equality of decorative feeling in the work of every artist; and any traveller knows that the pictorial mural painting flourishes to-day in countries with the finest traditions — hundreds of years old — to guide in the opposite direction. And even in the very heart of Paris, in the much-vaunted Panthéon itself, there is more than one example of the realistic.

The scheme of colour in the Delivery Room is dark and sumptuous. The raftered ceiling is of stained oak; the doorways and mantels of a remarkable blood-red marble, combined with variegated red and green; and the walls are wainscoted with oak up to within about eight feet of the ceiling, the remaining space being filled by the frieze. And in this rich handsome setting Mr. Abbey's use of varied colours, multiplied lights and shades, dazzling and glittering costumes, kingly trappings, and the cluttered picturesqueness of hosts of mediæval personages, makes an effect not unlike that of Sir Henry Irving's carefully arranged tableaux in an historical play. The spectator feels that he is looking at the scenes of a very living drama, only that here the curtain will not fall to shut out the illusion. Mr. Abbey conferred a benefit upon the public, that likes a change from mythology and abstractions, by his choice of subject. *The Quest of the Holy Grail* is known to every school-child, and Tennyson's verse which forms the introduction does not

fail to interest in later years. The hero of this, the greatest Christian legend, is the type of noble-minded, fearless manhood; and though the scholar, tracing out the various forms in which his history is figured in different countries, may doubt

Copyright, 1895, by E. A. Abbey. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE VISION. By EDWIN A. ABBEY.

that he ever existed, to the world at large he is an unquestioned part of the court of King Arthur and Britain's early history.

Out of the various stories of Parsifal, Percival, or Galahad, Mr. Abbey made a selection of incidents that would give a coherent account of his life and search, beginning with his infancy. At the time of this writing the series is still incomplete, only five paintings being in place.

This first scene is in the convent where Sir Galahad was

reared. One of the nuns kneeling upon the floor is holding up the babe in swaddling-clothes, to whom an angel bearing the Grail has appeared. The great angel, with large blue-white wings and floating draperies, fills nearly half of the canvas. The gracefulness of her figure and her delicate head recalls

Copyright, 1895, by E. A. Abbey. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE OATH OF KNIGHTHOOD. By EDWIN A. ABBEY.

the charm of the artist's drawings of fair maidens for illustrations of old English ballads. The holy little child puts out his hands toward her with the touching gesture of a baby pleased by some bright object which it wants to clutch. The wall behind them is covered with a blue tapestry, wrought with gold birds, lions, and stripes of conventional ornament. This is the

smallest of the paintings, which, owing to the construction of the room, vary in length from six to thirty-three feet.

In the next division is shown the interior of the chapel where Sir Galahad is receiving the order of knighthood. He kneels, robed in deep red, upon the altar steps. Behind him Sir Launcelot and Sir Bors, warlike figures in full armour, fasten his spurs. The nuns who have cherished the hero stand watching the ceremony, holding candles in their hands, that illumine the dim place, sending a yellow light over the grey walls painted with archaic Celtic figures.

The third picture is at the court of King Arthur. Near one end of the long composition is placed the monarch's curiously wrought, canopied throne. The king, now a very old man with hoary beard, stands to welcome the young knight who has entered with uncovered head and simple travelling-frock of red. A strange being, shrouded in voluminous white drapery, with a hood pulled down over his face, who in the legend is Joseph of Arimathea, guides the stranger to the Siege Perilous, the chair beside the king's throne, which none but the Knight of the Grail may occupy without being destroyed.

The Round Table has evidently been recently used for some great banquet, and is still covered with a white cloth. Behind it and in the spaces at the ends are crowds of knights, women, monks, and jesters,— the multitudinous attendance of a mediæval court, making a medley of expressive faces and varied actions. The knights hold up the hilts of their swords in awe at the presence of supernatural beings; for an angel, drawn large as in the first panel, hovers behind the front pillars of the throne, drawing away the red drapery that covers the magic seat, in which Sir Galahad may rest without fear. This

spiritual visitor is accompanied by numbers of her sisters, who are ranged side by side in long circling rows, filling the upper part of the background; and the great mass of white made by their robes and wings, the snowy linen table cloth, and Joseph of Arimathea's shroud which carries the light note down the

Copyright, 1895, by E A. Abbey.

THE ROUND TABLE.

foreground, makes the artist's choice of having Sir Galahad appear always dressed in red an artistic as well as a literary defect. His presence would have been more marked in the composition, and his connection with the throng of angels would have been unconsciously established, had his raiment showed the same virgin hue: whereas now he is not a striking central figure. In the general medley of colours the note of

red does not make him stand sufficiently apart from the general crowd.

The Holy Grail has life-giving power, and therefore the artist that would clothe in red the knight devoted to its service — red being the colour of life — would have reason for the

From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

By EDWIN A. ABBEY.

preference; but the Grail performed miracles entirely through a spiritual influence. Only those of spotless character could realise its sacred presence, and Sir Galahad could achieve the quest only because his soul was free from sin. Therefore, red, typifying earthly life and warm human love, does not carry out the highest conception of the hero or the object of his devotion. It is as the spiritual youth, strong "because his heart is

pure," clad in white an index of his white soul, that he appears to English chroniclers and poets, and dwells in the hearts of their readers.

The next painting shows that the quest has begun in earnest. The banqueting hall is deserted by the knights sworn to recover the Grail, and they have crowded to the chapel to receive the blessing of the Church upon their adventures. Fully two-thirds of the canvas is filled with kneeling men with their heads about on a level. They are in armour, and their blazoned shields strapped to their backs rest upon the floor, covering them to the shoulders. Each one holds a tall spear with a pennon fastened to the end, which makes a very forest of lances; while a multitude of small, square, and oblong banners, ornamented with quaint heraldic devices, jostle one another in the space above their heads. The knights face the chancel, where the Archbishop stands, his hands raised in benediction.

The whole length of one wall is occupied by the fifth composition, which shows Sir Galahad's first adventure after he has reached the court of the king, Amfortas, who possesses the Holy Grail, but who, because he sinned, has been cast into a trance, and has lain spell-bound for centuries, with his spell-bound court about him. The frieze on this side is broken in the middle by a heavy marble cornice several feet high, rising above a doorway; and Mr. Abbey has made happy use of the accident, building upon it the canopied bed upon which the old, wasted king lies, wrapped in great fur robes. He is the very type of withered age. Around his uncanny form every detail speaks of ages past, before his sin had brought the curse down upon his head. The chest that forms his couch is carved in curious ancient fashion, his sceptre and ornaments are

Copyright, 1895, by E. A. Abbey.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE DEPARTURE FOR THE GRAIL. By EDWIN A. ABBEY.

wrought in barbaric style, and the room, a vaulted hall with many pillars, shows, by the construction of the arches and the carving of the capitals, that it was the work of early Celtic builders.

On the right of Amfortas's impressive resting-place is the procession of the Grail. A glory of soft light streams from the covered vase, which is upheld by a most beautiful figure seen in profile, whose face is radiant in the glow. Upon the head of this guardian of the sacred cup is a close-fitting crown and ornaments of gold and jewels; and long white draperies falling from the shoulders, and trailing behind, heighten the majestic impression. The beams of light spread out over those following: Herodias's daughter, holding above her head, with slender hands and arms too delicate for the burden, the head of John the Baptist in a charger; a Roman soldier, with winged brass helmet, and a long white cape over his armour, bearing aloft a seven-branched golden candlestick; and the long lines and colours of this martial figure are then repeated in the cloaks and helmets of Longius, leaning upon the spear with which, legend says, he wounded Christ's side, and a second Roman soldier bearing another golden candlestick. The group is a very fine one, and of an interesting picturesqueness without too great an obtrusion of detail. The colour is superb; and the leading figure stands like a star of hope and promise at the head of the others, whose sins compel them ever to follow the symbol of a power they have despised.

The light from the Grail is reflected upon the left-hand side of the canvas, illuminating the marble arches and the lethargic crowd of monks, ladies, and men-at-arms who sit or stand beneath them. Close at the head of Amfortas's bed stands Sir

Copyright, 1895, by E. A. Abbey.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

DETAIL FROM THE CASTLE OF THE GRAIL. BY EDWIN A. ABBEY.

Galahad, wrapped in a voluminous red cloak. This is the only place where the artist has not drawn the hero in profile; and his face shown in its pure oval here, surrounded by a frame of soft blond hair, is a most beautiful one. In his innocent eyes is a look of bewilderment. He stands erect, holding the neck of his cloak with one graceful hand. The procession of the Grail will come and go, not waiting for him to collect his scattered thoughts; for he has become contaminated by the world, and cannot remember the question that must be asked to achieve his errand.

Any one who, priding himself on his critical faculty, has reached such a degree of narrowness that he can take no enjoyment in Mr. Abbey's series because he finds it lacking in certain fundamental decorative qualities, like his well-read brother, whose refined literary tastes lead him to condemn Dickens and Scott as pernicious, seems entitled to the sympathy, not unmixed with scorn, of the broader-minded, more sensible part of the community.

As long as charm, grace, poetic ideas, and a sympathetic presentation of lovely and noble images are of interest, Mr. Abbey's frieze will be regarded with enthusiasm, and will command admiration for many years after the more faultless efforts of less gifted, more mechanical painters are quite forgotten.

VII. THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY: JOHN S. SARGENT

At the first view of Mr. Sargent's decorations in the corridor that bears his name, their striking originality predominates over all other impressions: they are conceived in a spirit of grandeur, which rises to the exalted sphere where good and evil fight for mastery in the pages of Milton's *Paradise Lost.* They are as splendid an exhibition of artistic power as any painter living could make them. The colour is beautiful enough to carry them into the first rank, for that merit alone; and, while never transgressing the rules that govern the art of mural painting, they do not appear to be limited by them in any way.

Mr. Sargent has gone as straight to the result that he wished to obtain as Michael Angelo did in the Sistine Chapel; and the subject, *The Triumph of Religion*, reflects the thought of our own time as strongly as *The Last Judgment* does that of the earlier period.

When the corridor is complete, it will have a ceiling, lunette, and frieze at each end, and a large composition on the long wall between; but as yet the paintings for one end only are in place.

The series begins with the ceiling, where the gods of polytheism and idolatry are represented; in the lunette below is the captivity of the Jews; and the frieze shows the line of the Hebrew prophets. The upper divisions are a most wonderful rendering of ancient Egyptian and Assyrian art. Mr. Sargent studied their peculiar forms until they became as his own

From a photograph by N. L. Stebbins.

artistic properties, and he could turn their historic characters to his decorative purpose with absolute assurance. He portrays with the skill of the old native artists the half-bird and half-monster gods,— Moloch with his golden lions; the curious images of the sacred Trinity; the Egyptian king with head in profile and body in full view, as his subjects delineated the human figure; his ponderous brother of Assyria with his ferocious lion. Any one of these fragments might have been cut out of ancient paintings, so absolutely do they convey the impression familiar to us from antique monuments.

A very interesting use has been made of the custom of drawing figures in different sizes, to accord with the rank and importance of the persons represented. The body of the goddess Neith, the universal mother, stretches across the entire arch of the ceiling: her hands rest upon one cornice of the frieze, her feet upon another. The stature of the kings and gods is colossal. The Jews, being but mortals of lowly position, are simply life-size. Such a wonderful resurrection of the art of these long-dead civilisations, combined with the brilliancy of modern handling, gives the effect of some decoration on a thousand-years-old temple wall, which has suddenly sprung free from its technical limitations, and put on the attractions of truthful drawing, beautiful form, and the colouring of nature. The background of the ceiling is formed by the great stretched-out body of the goddess Neith. Her dark, oval face shows clearly. Her members are obscured, vaguely suggesting her corporeal presence as the shadow of some strange mystery. Close over her inscrutable brow is drawn a head-dress made of the symbol of immortality, a sphere hung between spreading wings of black and gold which stretch from one side of the

canvas to the other. As she was the mother of all things, above her glows the full moon, which was her offspring. Her outstretched arms are almost covered by the celebrated figure of Astarte, the witching moon-goddess, the female productive spirit, as Moloch on the opposite bend of the arch is the sun, or male principle.

Astarte stands upon a crescent moon. A cobra twined about her feet forewarns us that her worship was not like that which the Greeks gave to their chaste Luna, but one of sensuality and luxury. There are but few figures suggestive of these evil principles, either in art or literature, that bear comparison with this bewildering image of fascination. She is the sister of those delicate sorceresses whom Edmund Spenser conjured to besiege the honour of his true knights. The artist has framed-in her loveliness with columns which were copied from those in her temple, and a row of raised and gilded pine cones on either side show that behind her is the Tree of Life. To heighten the charm of her mysterious allurement, she is wrapped in a maze of diaphanous blue veiling as intangible as faint smoke-wreaths from a censer. Her fair luminous face and the rich gold ornaments on her robe shine through this misty covering. Beside her, dimly seen through the same pale screen, are small groups of her priestesses at their rites. The victims of their pleasures, come to their last reward, to be torn by vultures and chimæras. These minor scenes do not obtrude: they are part of a semi-background; and at first only the vision of the goddess is seen through her veil of glamour and seduction, just as she appeared upon her own altar, to the imaginations of her worshippers.

The full moon above Neith's head gives the effect of a halo

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1895, by Curtis & Cameron.

ASTARTE (DETAIL). BY JOHN S. SARGENT.

behind Astarte's tall crown, and under the earth-mother's chin are coiled the heavy folds of a serpent modelled in high relief with silver scales; and thus throughout the composition one figure or accessory overlaps or meets another, so that the lines connect and flow in and out without break or interruption, and one image passes to the next in easy sequence. A golden zodiac, finely graven, hides Neith's body; and the hollow centre shows the firmament shining upon her breast. Struggling in the serpent's coils, and fighting with him for the supremacy of the seasons, is the archer Thammuz, beloved of Astarte, the Phœnician myth illustrated being very similar to that of the Grecian one of Venus and Adonis. On one side of the disk Thammuz flies his arrows, beating his enemy back from the signs of the warm months of the year: on the other he is cruelly strangled in the silver coils, and is bewailed by Astarte, who will restore him to life with the returning spring. The figure of the archer with his muscular arm outstretched, winging swift arrows from his bow, the tense action of his splendidly modelled body, and the sweep of his red cloak, is a marvellous piece of painting, possible only from the brush of an artist to whom there are no impassable technical boundaries; and yet the fragment is kept so exactly in its place in the whole decoration that in the general effect the youth and his beloved goddess appear only as the ornaments of Neith's silver snake necklace.

On the lower rim of the zodiac flares the sun; and from it radiate straight beams of light, each ending in a small raised gold hand holding a seed, the symbol of its life-producing power. They spread out and down, nearly to the edge of the ceiling, across the tremendous group of the bull-headed god

Moloch, whose horns reach to the sun, who is four-armed, and who crushes his victims with his hands, while the golden mass of his lions group about his knees. Below is the dark note of the quaint carved images of Isis, Osiris, and Horus, ranged side by side, with their gloom still brightened by the shower of little hands. A mummy lies across the feet of these deities; and below it the globe, with a black, and a gold wing, symbol of immortality, completes the painting.

The group of the Sun-god is marvellous; and, indeed, the word recurs in attempting to show an appreciation of the figures which succeed each other in this chain of remarkable images. The colour throughout is very beautiful, with the gem-like brilliancy of Eastern inspiration which enraptures the senses, and leaves the imagination wondering that the hand of man can make things of such rare and living beauty.

The rib between the ceiling and the wall is gilded; and the following words, condensed from the twenty-first to the forty-fifth verses of the one hundred and sixth Psalm, are printed upon it in dark blue letters, and give the subject of the lunette below: "They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt. And they served . . . idols, which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, . . . unto the idols of Canaan. . . . Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people. . . . And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. Nevertheless, he regarded their affliction when he heard their cry; and he remembered for them his covenant."

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

MOLOCH (Detail). By JOHN S. SARGENT.

Mr. Sargent, in carrying out the idea of the strife between the Jewish and Pagan faiths, shows this by the confusion,— though a highly decorative one,— such as might be seen on a battlefield: every inch of the canvas is filled, figures cut across each other, and stand in each other's way. There is a medley of forms. The Sphinx is half concealed behind the gorgeous black and gold feather wrappings of the goddess Pasht, with straight armlike wings of immortal colours; vultures and ravens stand upon heaps of slain; the Jews trampled under foot, and bending beneath the golden yoke which their conquerors press down upon them; the light of fires in the background; and the vision of cherubim in the sky. The spectacle has been made one of great majesty, as befits an occasion that called down Jehovah himself to succor the Israelites.

The first complexity of the composition becomes simple enough when taken in the three grand masses of: Pharaoh and the objects of his worship; the kneeling Jews, with the manifestation of their Creator behind his cherubim; and the Assyrian king, with his bird and beast deities. The false gods are grouped in the extreme sides of the canvas. Before them stand their respective princely worshippers, facing each other. Their colossal figures tower above their victims; and their raised hands, holding the weapons that are ready to descend with crushing force, nearly touch the top of the arch. Each follows closely the portraits which have kept their images familiar through so many ages. Pharaoh is slight, long-limbed, slim-waisted. His face has the deep-set eye, the long eyebrow, and the peculiar line of profile which constituted the national type of beauty. The crown upon his head — a high helmet-shaped structure of gold — raises his proportions many inches. The uplifted hand

grasps a scourge: the other holds his captive by the hair. The Assyrian king confronting him is of huge proportions, and with exaggerated muscular development. His robes are of the heaviest material, and the masses of his hair and beard add an air of ferocity to his brutal countenance. With one hand he presses down the yoke. The other clutches a heavy weapon, which he is about to wield with terrible strength.

Between these types of cunning and ferocity the nude beauty of the kneeling Hebrews presents a contrast suggestive of that between their religion and the unholy imaginings of foolish and brutal men. In the crouching group there is a most beautiful repetition of bowed heads, bent limbs, and hands joined for prayer. Two youths in the centre raise their faces to heaven, and with upraised hands beseech Jehovah to save. Behind, the imploring hands of many more such suppliants are outlined against the bright flames of the fires newly kindled on the altars of the true God; and, as the light spreads out over the heads of the gigantic kings, it is cleft by the crimson pinions of the cherubim who fly before the face of the Almighty. Their heads are entirely hidden behind their wings, which have a most remarkable circling action, giving the idea of a power strong enough to penetrate through all natural substances.

There has been some criticism excited by the use of the crimson note in a place where there might have been a more striking combination; but to the writer the tone used shows the fine restraint of a truly great artist, who did not wish to sacrifice harmony for an effect which, however magnificent, would be somewhat sensational. As it is, a strictly decorative unity of colour is maintained.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1895, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE CAPTIVITY OF THE JEWS (LUNETTE). BY JOHN S. SARGENT.

From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1898, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE HEBREW PROPHETS (Frieze). By JOHN S. SARGENT.

In the Frieze of the Prophets the central figure of Moses, modelled in relief, with golden wings wrapped about his shoulders, and the great tables of the law clasped in his strong hands, makes a connecting link between the scenes above and the simplicity of his successors. In the painting of these eighteen figures, Mr. Sargent is entirely the brilliant painter, whose manner is familiar through the magnificent series of portraits which has made him famous for the past twenty years.

They are each drawn with an individuality strikingly suggestive of the character in the Scriptural narrative, and, with their simple draperies thrown about them, stand with the solemnity of a chorus in a classic drama. Joshua and Elijah are more rugged and primitive than the others. Daniel is slender: his face is delicate and fine. There is a hopeful look in old Haggai's sunken eyes. He raises one withered hand in rejoicing for the Saviour whose coming he foretells, upholding with the other his sad brother Micah, who turns away his head. Jeremiah is wrapped in sad meditation, and Isaiah throws a radiant glance into the future. Zephaniah, pondering on thoughts too mighty for his brain, forms a most dramatic group with Joel, who stretches out his arms in agony, and in the majesty of his grief covers his face with his mantle, and Obadiah clasping his hoary locks, who sits on the ground before them. The balance of this awful despair is restored by the calmness of the last prophet, young Hosea. He stands erect, wrapped from head to foot in a soft white mantle. A brave, thoughtful face looks out from under the shadow of the hood. His message is one of peace and of hope.

When the commission for the decorations was given to

Mr. Sargent, his reputation as a portrait painter was so high that the change to another field was rather dreaded by his admirers; but no sooner was the first canvas in place than he achieved an immediate triumph, just as he had done years before when his first portraits were exhibited in the Paris Salon. In his mural painting the qualities which had made his fame have but gathered breadth from the wider scope of the achievement. He shows the same unlimited faculty of producing extraordinary effects with methods that make them seem the height of unstudied art, the same vitality permeating every brush stroke, and the gift of transporting the very life of his subject to the canvas. The power that thrills through his portrait of Carmencita, so that she seems to have sprung into life at the sound of a dance note, that makes his *Beatrice* — frankly confessed recollection of Velasquez as she is — true sister of the immortal artist's childish Infants and Infantas, lives again in this array of the spiritual and earthly powers of the ancient world. Puvis de Chavannes, once laying down the exact laws with which he expected his work to comply, said, "The composition must be adapted, first of all, to the place it is to occupy when completed, and to be adapted so perfectly that the public cannot imagine, the main idea being accepted, another arrangement for the ensemble and another grouping for the figures." The words apply as if especially written to sum up the value of Mr. Sargent's work; for it is, indeed, of the order of things that are entirely convincing, to be accepted as sufficient in every decorative sense.

In the part of the design to be finished, the subjects will be confined to the time when Christ preached on earth and the

era that he inaugurated,—very difficult themes; but, undoubtedly, Mr. Sargent will present them in a way that will again set the art world wondering.

Whatever developments are in store, it is not to be expected that, when the series is finished, its æsthetic value will be very different from what it is to-day. Certain parts of it may rise above or fall below the standard of the pieces that are our present admiration, may appeal more strongly to personal or popular taste; but, however varied in inspiration, thought, or feeling,—and the wide scope of the artist's powers can be seen in the different expression and treatment of the ceiling and the frieze,—yet it must be borne in mind that the creative intelligence, working over this goodly area as over a portrait canvas, will keep the interest of the parts subservient to the forcible impression of the whole.

As the compositions have been put in place, their originality has called forth a multitude of arguments and questions. How did Mr. Sargent come to have such ideas? How did he have the courage to paint them? to be so entirely himself, and to sweep away all preconceived theories? How did he expect people to understand, let alone admire, such an extraordinary departure from the usual? Would the public consider him quite mad? How has it happened that he has been particularly well understood? that the admiration aroused has amounted to a furor? The answer to these queries is not hard to find. Mr. Sargent has here shown himself to be a truly great artist; and the decorations are of such an order that they absolutely compel recognition and honour. It is almost impossible to explain the reasons why one work of art precedes another in order. The manifestations of æsthetic power are too subtle and

indefinable to be reduced to the limits of words. To distinguish the fact requires a taste that is not born in every one, and needs to be refined by cultivation. Still, it would seem as if a person must be strangely lacking in discrimination that could stand in this corridor and not realize that the paintings are of an unusual grandeur. Very often those that depart from the beaten track, with all their striving, do not get beyond fancy and novelty, often not beyond sensationalism and eccentricity, which cannot long hold any position; but Mr. Sargent has given us the real thing. His work is of such extraordinary merit that there is not a period in the history of the art, known to the writer, in which it would not rank among the best.

In the beginning of this chapter the display of imagination was compared with that which animates *Paradise Lost*, and it is with the sonorous roll of Milton's lines, where one image succeeds another, and all are bound together by the underlying thought, that these scenes of the religious history of the world follow each other; and this, we believe, will be the final impression, when Mr. Sargent has put his name to the last canvas, and completed a piece of work on which his fame can rest,— brilliant modern brother, as he is, of the muralists of old.

VIII. THE INFLUENCE OF ART ORGANISATIONS ON MURAL PAINTING

The growth of the feeling that intelligent and expert judgment should be used in the adornment of the city, and its parks, public buildings, et-cetera, led to the organisation of the Municipal Art Society of New York in 1893. The motto chosen to represent its aims, "To Make Us Love Our City, We Must Make Our City Lovely," epitomises the intentions of its founders, who, moved by the most disinterested motives, desired to set a standard of excellence, and to raise the public taste in matters of art. Edwin H. Blashfield, who was much in sympathy with the society, wrote in its interests an essay called "A Plea for Municipal Art," which called attention to the movement on foot, and challenged the sympathies of all who considered themselves enlightened citizens. "New York," says Mr. Blashfield in this stirring paper, "more enterprising than any other city, rich, prosperous, generous, and proud, as she should be, of her greatness, is yet far behind not only Paris and London, but even tiny provincial towns of France, Italy, Germany, in the possession of an art which should dignify and illustrate the history of her past and present. . . . The commonwealths of Athens, Florence, Venice, the free burgs of Germany, the great trading towns of Flanders, the cities which have passed through a period of natural evolution in art, considered it a national glory, and used it both as a means and as an end in a truly democratic spirit, *pro bono publico.*

"They believed that certain benefits arose from the cultivation of beauty, that the pleasures of private life, the dignity of public life, were increased by the aid of the arts.... Now to whom did the cities of the past owe this public decoration? Was it only to kings, and emperors, and grand dukes, whom we in America have not? No. Athens, Florence, Venice, Bruges, Nuremberg, were given their art by the very men whom we have with us to-day,—the magistrates, the merchants, the artisans....

"Art history gives scores of instances of the way in which such questions were treated. In studying them, we are struck with the intense earnestness shown by the ruling bodies in their debates and decisions regarding art matters; they considered them as questions of state.... And this art was the property of all men; it belonged to every citizen who had eyes to see; it was 'of the people, for the people, by the people.' The history of the commonwealth was not shut up in libraries: it was made living upon the walls, so that the humblest and least educated citizens knew its principal and worthiest events. Every one is more or less impressed through the eyes, especially so are the masses. 'Pictures are the books of the ignorant,' said Saint Augustine; and to appeal to their unlettered citizens these old republics used them, knowing that few can grasp an abstract idea, but that a visible, tangible image is easily understood."

The society began in the quietest way, hoping that, as its aims became known, and as the value of its judgment was proved, a more influential position in municipal affairs would be gained gradually. All that it asked was to be allowed to present to the city, from time to time, gifts of paintings or sculpture, such as would be worthy of her acceptance. As the

Copyright, 1895, by Edward Simmons.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

JUSTICE. By EDWARD SIMMONS.

funds to meet the expenses of these costly presents had to be raised by subscriptions among the members, it was with some effort that a sum was got together sufficient for the first enterprise, which was to provide the decorations in the Appellate Court Room of the Criminal Courts Buildings, Centre Street, New York. A competition was held, to which a full number of artists responded, the award being given to Edward Simmons, whose sketches were carried out in even a finer key, so that the impression of the finished canvases is most dignified and majestic. The plan of the room admitted three spaces for paintings, the central one being tall and narrow with an arched top, and an oblong panel on each side. The more important composition shows the steps and entrance to a massive building, probably a prison, with a heavy iron door studded with great nails. Justice stands framed in the portal. Her handsome countenance is resolute and earnest without severity. In one hand, stretched high above her head, she holds her scales; in the other, a crystal ball surmounted by a golden cross. Over her shoulders hangs the national flag, the white stars shining on her breast, the stripes falling behind her and trailing to her feet. Below her stand two boys, one holding a sword, the other a dove. Overhead, filling the arch, cherubs floating amid the folds of a large drapery support escutcheons bearing the arms of state and city.

In the panel to the right are *The Fates*, who sit upon a bench, the thread of life passing from hand to hand, Clotho holds a fair young child in her lap. Her head is thrown back; and her whole attitude, as she twirls her distaff, breathes the spirit of youth and hope. But Lachesis carries the cord close to the fatal shears with which old Atropos will sever it. Beside the

wrinkled dame lies a skull. The panel on the left represents *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*, and corresponds in colour and arrangement with *The Fates*. The figure of Liberty rejoicing in freedom, after having been chained, is especially worthy of admiration. The paintings were unveiled on November 18,

Copyright, 1895, by Edward Simmons. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE FATES. By EDWARD SIMMONS.

1895, with some ceremony. This has been the only piece of work which the society has accomplished by its unaided efforts; for, the precedent having been established, larger opportunities opened. It was aided by the co-operation of ten other art societies in erecting the handsome monument by Daniel Chester French, in memory of Richard M. Hunt, which now stands against the wall of Central Park opposite the Lenox Library; and since then the scope of its usefulness has been so

greatly extended that competitions for works of art to be erected by public or private enterprise can be held under its auspices, the judgment of its jury having come to be regarded as the best that can be had for guidance in such matters. It was with much pleasure that the well-wishers of the society learned a

Copyright, 1895, by Edward Simmons. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY. By EDWARD SIMMONS.

few years ago that the municipal authorities had awakened to its great usefulness in the community, and had made the large appropriation of ten thousand dollars to be spent under its direction for a ceiling in the Assembly Room of the City Hall, New York. Although a change in the government took place before the plan could be carried out, and the appropriation was rescinded, yet the fact that so important a step has once been taken leads to the hopeful supposition that in the course of

time there will be a practical co-operation in all such affairs of public interest.

Similar organisations have been started in one or two other cities, and it is hoped that the imitation may become so general that every municipality may have this means of fostering and upholding artistic standards.

The interest in our subject had grown so rapidly that the body of artists employed in decorative work was sufficiently large by 1895 to warrant the foundation of the National Society of Mural Painters, New York; and this was not only intended for the benefit of the members, but to bring about a better understanding of the necessities of the art, both in the minds of decorators, and the architects and contractors that should call for their services; and cause a more complete and beneficial co-operation between them.

To this end the constitution opened with the preamble that "its object shall be to promote the delineation of the human figure in its relation to architecture, whether rendered in pigment, stained glass, mosaic, tapestry, or other appropriate medium, and at the same time to foster the development of its ornamental concomitants." This was followed by the strictly practical propositions: —

1. To formulate a code for decorative competitions, and, as experience may suggest, by-laws to regulate professional practice.

2. To hold exhibitions of all and only such work as is included within its legitimate scope.

3. To establish an educational propaganda through the agency of the press, lectures, existing schools, or in whatever manner the opportunity of the moment may suggest.

4. To advocate the recognition of the true position of the decorative artist in his relation to constructive work.

5. To urge a rational decoration of our public buildings, and to co-operate with other societies having in view the beautifying of the country.

These resolutions were not confined to paper. Standing committees on professional practice, civic buildings, education, and exhibits were formed; and, through the agency of the first of these, a number of articles regulating important business questions have been wisely formulated. The work of the second committee concerns us still more nearly, as it has had most successful results; for correspondence was opened with such architects as were known to be engaged upon public or semi-public buildings, and advice and assistance were freely offered in case anything of a decorative nature should be contemplated. No time or pains was spared in impressing these facts, the chairman even visiting other cities when called upon by architects that thought they might have an opportunity for using mural painting. Nothing materialised, however, until James Brown Lord, when building the New Court House of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the city of New York, accepted the well-meant overtures; and the society co-operated with him in the plan and charge of the decorations.

A detailed account of the matter will be found in the chapter devoted to the Appellate Court House, where the brilliant success of the decorated rooms has been a great triumph for the principles and methods for which the Society of Mural Painters has been working.

IX. THE WALKER ART BUILDING AND THE MENDELSSOHN GLEE CLUB

The scale upon which public buildings with lavish appropriations for the purpose can be decorated is quite impossible in most cases where a private individual or even a business corporation is concerned, because of necessary limits of expenditure; but in more modest proportions there have been quite a number of mural paintings placed in residences, hotels, banks, insurance offices, et-cetera, and a later chapter will be devoted to the mass of this interesting miscellaneous work. The two buildings the names of which stand at the head of this page are of especial note, however; for the six paintings they contain occupy as high a place as any others in this country.

The Walker Art Building at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, designed by Charles F. McKim, of McKim, Mead & White, is a most elegant structure, every detail showing the distinguished taste for which the architect is celebrated. The entrance is through a recessed loggia, decorated by Elmer E. Garnsey with classical designs; and beyond is the Sculpture Hall where beneath the dome are four large tympanums by John La Farge, Abbott H. Thayer, Elihu Vedder, and Kenyon Cox.

What unerring judgment was displayed in the selection of these artists, that the four canvases might make an harmonious impression! With the choice that was made the result was sure to be interesting. As it is, it is astonishingly perfect. Mr.

Copyright, 1898, by John La Farge.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1898, by Curtis & Cameron.

ATHENS. By JOHN LA FARGE.

La Farge, Mr. Thayer, and Mr. Vedder have worked with most unusual equality; and Mr. Cox is an able fourth, with a more sympathetic painting than usual.

In *Athens* (upon the east wall) Mr. La Farge has personified the city in a female figure, with a mural crown upon her head. She is clad in a cloak of deep red, and a green drapery partly covers the block on which she is seated. She is watching Minerva, patron goddess of all artists, who is making a drawing on a small tablet that she holds in her hand. The goddess is robed in flowing white. The theme of her study is nature, which is personified by the presiding spirit of the sacred grove in which they have met. This spirit occupies a position in the centre. She leans against a terminal column, crowned with a head of Pan, god of the lower forces of nature. The tall, slender torch of life that she holds smokes above her head, which shows in relief against the foliage of the trees on the hillock behind her. The group is placed on high ground; and below, in the distance, the landscape suggests the lines of the mountains about the Grecian capital.

The canvas was quite widely shown at picture exhibitions, and was felt to be a little disappointing; but this has been so invariably the impression made upon the writer,—and also noted by many other critics,—when mural paintings are seen out of place, that a just or valuable judgment cannot be made under these circumstances. The nobler the decorative quality, the more trying is such a detached condition, as any one was convinced that saw Puvis de Chavannes's canvases in the Salon, where they never appeared to advantage.

The reader who is perhaps fortunately familiar with Mr. La Farge's painting, or at any rate, it may be presumed, has

Copyright, 1894, by Elihu Vedder.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

ROME. By ELIHU VEDDER.

read the first chapter, and gained an idea of his standing, will feel that our subject is much enriched by every opportunity that is given him to exercise his powers as a decorator.

Mr. Vedder was fortunate in the subject *Rome*, since he has made his home in Italy for many years, and is entirely in sympathy with classical traditions.

His composition on the west wall, however, does not suggest the antique monuments or history of the Eternal City, but illustrates the spiritual qualities which underlie all art. The figures are placed in front of a marble wall, ornamented with fine carving, suggestive of a corridor or room in a palace. The large circular opening wherein *Nature* stands framed, shows the sky above her. This statuesque nude figure is very beautifully drawn; her long hair unbound floats about her; one hand rests upon the Tree of Life, whose roots, growing beside her shapely feet, hide a hideous skull. Upon the trunk hangs a tablet graven with the Greek letter Alpha; and upon the branch whereon the fruit is ripe that she bears in her left hand, is a similar form with Omega upon it,— the beginning and the end. A twisting strip of drapery with the graceful folds that this artist draws to perfection finds its way upward from a lyre that rests upon the floor, curving around the figure of Nature, and swelling out above her head and ending in a swirl that is caught by the slender branches of the Tree of Life.

Mr. Vedder always depends more upon form and flowing lines than upon perfection in colour; and the rather neutral flesh tones in this and the other nude and partly nude figures are so entirely his own medium of expression that one would not have them otherwise, what is lacking in brilliancy of colour being made up by the richness of the design and fulness of form.

On the left, *Thought* is seated. Her robe of many folds and the scarf about her head and neck add to her majestic proportions. Her finely modelled classic face recalls the types of mysterious sibylline women that the artists of the Renaissance used to paint. Beside her sits the wingéd Soul, an extremely youthful maiden, who holds a scroll, and gazes into her companion's inscrutable face. These two figures, and the emblems crowded together in the extreme corner, are balanced by an opposite group: *Colour*, nude to the waist, her low-browed face, from which the parted hair is rolled back, showing an exquisite line of profile; and *Love*, who is drawing upon a tablet with an arrow.

The line of figures is considerably above the lower edge of the canvas, which allows the names of the qualities they represent; and a band of conventional ornament consisting of garlands festooned between masks to be painted beneath them. Mr. Vedder has long been notable as an artist of powerful imagination, whose work is always conceived according to a very high standard. The stamp of his distinguished personality is upon this rendering of Rome. No one else could have given the subject with the same peculiar plastic charm, or the air that is half mystery, half grandeur. He has done nothing finer than this in his long artistic career.

In Mr. Thayer's painting, *Florence*, on the south wall, the front of the platform on which the figures rest is ornamented with five heraldic shields, the central one blazoned with the lilies of the city. Above this the heavenly guardian of the Arts, white-robed, stands, protecting her earthly children, *Painting* and *Sculpture*,— toddling babes who lean against her knees, undecided whether or not to take the few steps by which they

could reach the suppliants that kneel before them with hands enticingly outstretched. The background is a distant view of the city. The breadth of Mr. Thayer's style gives his compositions a quality which is closely akin to the true spirit of decoration; and even his small canvases, if rolled in place instead of being hung in frames, would be astonishingly fine mural paintings. So that in this his first strictly decorative essay his experience of the special requirements of the occasion seems already complete; and his splendid painting brings forcibly to mind how truly such gifts are born, and cannot be made.

The very way the artist lays on his paint is a beauty in itself, for he is indeed a painter for painters. He has thrown away all the conventions of academic training; and his technique is marvellously personal, expressing the most subtle, indefinable aspects of nature broadly, simply, and with striking directness, and produces an *ensemble* which is distinguished by the largeness of the entirely æsthetic impression, by grandeur and originality. No words can do justice to the loveliness of this painting of *Florence*, the gracious, all-womanly protecting angel; her grave, noble face; her milk-white arms and neck, showing amid her white drapery with the luminosity of nature; the wings, gently toned, that spread about her; the tenderness with which the children's little soft bodies have been treated; the simplicity of the kneeling figures; the atmospheric effect of the distant city.

Greatness is one of the rarest qualities, and most highly to be prized. Its shadow ever dwells upon Mr. Thayer's achievement; and the power of this canvas stirs the imagination, and carries the thoughts into regions filled with the memories of the most beautiful forms, which have served the spirit of art as immortal garments.

Copyright, 1894, by Abbott H. Thayer.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

FLORENCE. By ABBOTT H. THAYER.

It is to be deplored that this is the only example of the artist's skill in the field that the volume covers. Let us hope that this will not be the case much longer. There should be more than one important series from his hand, while his talents stand at their present ripe and vigorous development.

There are no American paintings that are animated by more beautiful ideals or have tendencies more noble and exalting; and it behooves our rich men and our architects to see that the multitude that visits our public buildings, yearning for cultivation, for knowledge, for a glimpse of something lovely outside of their unæsthetic experiences, following each painted wall with an earnestness that is absolutely pathetic, are not deprived of the pleasure which this inestimable artist could give them. It would be interesting to see how Mr. Thayer would acquit himself on an ambitious area, like that of the Sargent Corridor. Perhaps this is one of the good things the future has in store.

When Mr. Cox had in contemplation *Venice*, which is now on the north wall, he spent some time in the City of the Adriatic, reviving his memories of the Venetian masters, for whom he had always felt the deepest admiration; and the influence of their robust style and glowing colour can be seen in his canvas. Any one that can draw and paint as well as Mr. Cox, and who works from such high motives, always gives out what is good art; but his compositions often appear too premeditated, too accurately weighted, the groups of faultless figures carefully arranged seem too cold, to appeal to the general favour. But here the largeness of the masses, a broader, more sweeping line than usual, a greater fulness of colour, add interest and charm. One need not depend upon the critical

Copyright, 1894, by Kenyon Cox.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

VENICE. By KENYON COX.

faculty in order to speak in its praise; for admiration leaps before analysis, and the enthusiasm is thoroughly aroused. Following the favourite manner of the enthroned Madonnas which are typical of the school, *Venice* sits in the centre, her high throne covered with red and gold brocade that falls below her feet and rises above her head, making a rich bar of colour. A crown rests on her fair hair, her white gown is patterned with gold,— a reproduction of a vestment in a painting by Veronese,— and is half covered by a crimson satin cloak with jewelled clasps.

At her feet is *Painting*, the type of whose head amid the masses of her warm-coloured hair, her strong nude torso, and the changeful orange and red drapery wrapped about her knees recall the full-favoured beauties, whose silks and satins but partly conceal their fine persons, that were the ideals of the Venetian artists. The lines of her figure compose most pleasingly with the lion of St. Mark behind her, a splendid beast with tawny and rose-coloured wings. Beyond is a glimpse of distant boats, the Ducal Palace, and the Campanile of St. Mark's.

The male figure on the left typifies *Commerce*, with the attributes of Mercury. He rests easily against one side of the throne. A violet cloak falls about him, the wings on his cap, *caduceus*, and sandals are tipped with scarlet. A pair of the characteristic yellow sails, ornamented in red and black, loom up behind him; a bale of goods, coins, a string of pearls, and a steering oar fill the corner.

The paintings, excepting the one by Mr. La Farge, which was finished in 1898, are signed 1894.

Our distances are so much greater than those in Europe,

where a journey to see even one good picture repays the trouble, that it is quite impossible for many persons outside of those connected with the business or instruction of the college to visit this distant Maine town. It has therefore been the greater pleasure to speak of these remarkable paintings at some length, in hopes of adding to the appreciation of their merit and to the enjoyment of the reproductions, which is all that most of the world will ever see of them.

When called upon to decorate the concert hall of the Mendelssohn Glee Club, the problem before Mr. Blum was twofold. The paintings must be suitable in theme and character to an environment intended to heighten the charm of the musical occasions for which it was designed, and must accord — a difficult task without falling into feebleness of tone and colour — with the unrelieved white finish of the room. The space consisted of the half-dome immediately over the stage, and a frieze, fifty feet long by twelve feet high, on each of the side walls. At the time of this writing only the frieze has been put into place.

Mr. Blum's reputation was already high, both as an illustrator and as a painter of very clever easel pictures; and his treatment of the unimportant opportunities for decorations that had come his way, stimulated the desire to see what he would accomplish on a larger scale. As soon as the first panel was seen, it was evident that he had quite surpassed himself, and had at once established his right to be considered among the foremost American decorators.

The Moods of Music, finished in 1895, is, as the name implies, suggestive of the various impressions of musical forms and harmonies. The scene is laid in a meadow dappled with spring flowers; and the background, except for a short stretch

of sky at each end, is covered by the intertwining branches of orchard trees heavily laden with blossoms. In this paradise a procession of young maidens has halted; and some of them are playing the old game of forming a ring around a favourite, and whirling madly round and round, so that she cannot break through the clasped hands. To the right, against a bit of classic wall, are stately women with lyres, and tall, lithe flute-players with skins girt about their hips, who play a tune upon their instruments that has set the young feet springing on the sward; and beyond the merry-makers, on the left, the rest of their companions crowd up in pairs, some playing on enormous tambourines and others singing as they appear around the edge of the trees. The tone of the landscape is of that delicate lightness both in leafage and blossom which, mirrored under a clear, cool sky, makes the peerless loveliness of the early part of the spring. And in the midst of this the notes of the girlish blond and brunette heads, the bare arms and necks, and the many hues of grey, pink, lavender, and green, and white, of their fluttering draperies, worn with careless negligence, are as harmonious as if a flock of soft-feathered doves had lighted upon the grass.

If one has ever seen a bevy of girls delighting in the advent of the warm weather, who have trooped off by themselves to gather wild flowers and indulge in a happy frolic, dancing and skipping about in the happiest abandonment, until the plainest grows handsome in the excitement of the moment, then a little idea of the spirit of this canvas can be formed. Only that here the charm is heightened a thousand-fold, for the artist has drawn a vision of Arcadia, where all faces are comely, all figures elegant, where the sun does not burn or scorch, and

the blossoms of April are as lasting as they are sweet. The refinement, the grace, the irresistible loveliness of the conception, cannot be described.

There are no paintings in this country that are more absolutely decorative or fulfil the conditions of their environment more strictly than this. The entire effect makes a matchless combination of delicate, pure colour with the dead white of the walls, the rhythmic movement of the figures is one with the strains of the voices that swell beneath them, and the composition is managed with such cleverness that in the throng of beauties — each one worthy of closest study — there is not one of them, or the least fold or garland or fluttering lock of hair, however fascinating in itself, but that is obliged to play a subordinate part for the benefit of the decorative impression. The interest centres upon the leader of the pageant, surrounded by her ring of playmates, their wind-blown garments swirling around them in fantastic shapes,— a fair ethereal company, their faces lighted with smiles and laughter, suggesting the Andante, Allegro, Allegretto, and other musical movements. In the fear of falling into the error of prettiness, so many artists have forgotten the beautiful, and put the public off with ugliness, which is strangely called "character," or with abstract and uninteresting types that are vaguely called "classic," that it is a great pleasure to see this painting, in which beauty of every order is poured out with a generous hand.

Although much that has been said concerning *The Moods of Music* applies to the second panel, *A Vintage Festival* (1898), there is one considerable difference: the first is a scene which has never been presented in just that way before. It is as distinctly an individual conception as Botticelli's *Primavera* or

Mendelssohn's *Spring Song*. While the other, for all the charm of its arrangement, differs but little in effect and feeling from other gorgeous processions in white marble temples, painted by artists that have combined careful study of classic architecture, ceremonials, and costumes, with the technical brilliancy necessary to produce the subject in a lifelike manner. But, granting the distinction, it must be conceded that the artist has given the two processions in a way that avoids monotony. They are admirable pendants, and complement each other. Their contrasting forms show the delicate and imaginative side of the art of music, and its sensuous and intoxicating power. The votaries of Bacchus go clad in rich colours; their revels are unrestrained; they abandon themselves in ecstasies of devotion to the god of wine. No heavenly music sounds in their ears, but stirring melodies that suggest the pleasures of the earth "and the fulness thereof." Some of the groups framed in the fine white marble setting are very beautiful,— noticeably, the boy holding a kid in his arms, that heads the revellers; and the four young women on the balustrade behind him; the mother, crouched in the foreground, clasping her fair-haired, nude child, whose arm is twined about her neck; and the tall, graceful figure in the centre that, with back turned toward the spectator, is looking out over the landscape in the background.

It has not yet been decided when or in what manner the half-dome will be completed; but Mr. Blum's admirers, and all admirers of good art, are awaiting the event with some impatience.

X. THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The exterior of the pile of solid masonry which is dedicated to the housing of the National Library has the characteristics of the well-worn type of our government buildings. The conventionality of the design; the unnecessary flight of steps at the entrance, erected with the intention of giving an air of monumental grandeur; the dome which has no particular dignity; and the details, which are properties used by conservative architects from one ocean to the other,— are all familiar; and yet, despite this lack of architectural distinction, the building must be regarded as having very extraordinary claims to importance.

For it is a model of convenience, both for library purposes and for the accommodation of the public, and, by the extent to which both plastic and pictorial decoration have been used in the interior, an artistic example has been given to the nation, that has awakened a broader and deeper interest in our subject than has ever been shown before.

We have no city that is equal to Washington for the diffusion of ideas; for it is largely an exhibition ground, which draws people from all parts of the country, who go the rounds of the official buildings, and carry home new and enlarged views from what they have seen. To the majority of these sight-seers the decorations are as great a revelation as the Italian frescoes are to their more travelled countrymen; and the feeling entertained toward the new departure marks a

period of development, when both mural painting and sculpture, of a high artistic order, are no longer dependent upon private enterprise or the fostering care of a few very cultivated cities, but have an assured place in the broader field of our national institutions.

No sooner are the entrance doors of the Library of Congress passed than the outer walls are forgotten, for they are only the shell and casing of one of the most remarkable and interesting interiors on this side of the Atlantic. The admiration grows with every step through the rooms and corridors. Nothing just like it has been seen anywhere else, for it is distinctly characteristic of our time, our state of prosperity and wealth, and our advancement in the arts; and it is of much more value now, and will be in the future, than if, though exhibiting fewer mistakes and shortcomings, it had lost its best distinction,—the stamp of intense character. Although each of the distinguished artists that received commissions for the figure subjects was consulted, when it was possible, about the setting of his paintings, and any modifications that his taste suggested were carried out, still this policy did not cause any great revolution; and the large general plan of decoration must be accredited first to Edward Pearce Casey, the largeness of whose guiding mind inspired all, and then to Elmer E. Garnsey, who was in his employ.

The somewhat complicated history of the building opened with the designs made by Messrs. Smithmeyer and Pelz that were accepted by Congress in 1886, to be carried out under a commission which consisted of the Secretary of the Interior, the Architect of the Capitol Extension, and the Librarian of Congress. Two years later a complete change was made; and

Brigadier-general Casey, the Chief of the Corps of Engineers of the Army, was placed in sole charge, the appropriations at his command being limited to about six millions of dollars.

Bernard R. Green, with the titles of Superintendent and Engineer, was associated with General Casey, until the death of the latter, when Mr. Green was promoted to the vacant place. Paul Pelz, one of the original architects, continued his connection until 1892, when the walls were little more than half their intended height. He was succeeded by Edward Pearce Casey, and it was owing to this change and to Mr. Casey's taste and judgment that the success of the decorations are due. With a large corp of assistants, he worked for over three years upon the plans for the interior, only certain portions of which had been completed by his predecessor; and such was the magnitude of his undertaking that not only were fifty orders given to distinguished artists and sculptors, but it was found necessary to place each branch of the decoration in the hands of a competent expert, who had the oversight of a band of skilled workmen,— Elmer E. Garnsey of the painters, Albert Weinhart of the sculptors and modellers, and H. T. Schladermundt of the workers in mosaic and coloured glass.

Mr. Garnsey's scheme of colour and design is so admirable that, even were the more celebrated artistic features lacking, the building would still be of great beauty; for within the limits that he sets for himself he is a most distinguished artist. He has planned the spaces at his disposal in sequences of colour that give largeness, magnificence, and variety, and upon this strong basis his use of ornament, the tendency of which is always structural and architectural, recalls the finest periods of such work in Italy, of which he has been a devoted

student; and, although his methods show their inspiration too plainly to be considered original, yet he brings much of his own treatment to the revival of the older order.

It would be a pleasure to linger upon many of the fine details, and to comment upon notable architectural features,—the statues, reliefs, mosaics, plaster ornamentations, et-cetera,

Copyright, 1896, by C. S. Pearce. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

STUDY. By CHARLES SPRAGUE PEARCE.

which go to make up the remarkable vistas that stretch out before the eyes, where all the arts seem to have become united in one family, each an accessory of the other. But the descriptions here must necessarily be limited to the work of the mural painters, of whom over twenty were engaged. In their selection a most remarkable breadth of mind was displayed. No one phase in the art of the day, or any one school, predominates. Impressionism, classicism, individualism, all are given an equal opportunity; and the period of American painting is

spread out upon the walls in a way that is thoroughly representative.

In planning the Grand Staircase and the corridors about it, the architect's aim stood high; and he set aside an enormous space which would allow for the superb proportions he desired, and this for no utilitarian ends,— the rest of the library makes

Copyright, 1896, by C. S. Pearce. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

RELIGION. By CHARLES SPRAGUE PEARCE.

sufficient claims to utility,— but to make a purely architectural and æsthetic triumph, which has justified the appropriation beyond all expectations. On the lower story the attention is first claimed by the corridor where Charles Sprague Pearce's compositions of *The Family* are placed. They are decidedly in a pictorial vein, and are marred by the weakness of the artist's drawing which is apparent everywhere. The rather sweet, clean colour and the prettiness of the landscapes have to atone for the lack of more sterling qualities.

Certain of the series are far more pleasing than others, the largest one, properly of *The Family*, which shows a man in the prime of life returning from hunting to the home circle of wife, children, and parents, being fatally stiff and monotonous both in design and execution; while *Study*, where two young girls are seated upon some large rocks, has much more ease,

Copyright, 1896, by C. S. Pearce. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

RECREATION. By CHARLES SPRAGUE PEARCE.

and *Religion* has become deservedly well known, the thought being well carried out in the simple grave figures of the man and woman kneeling in the act of worship before an unsteady altar made of two stones, upon which burns the fire that is the object of their devotion.

Edward Simmons was given entire control of the decorative plan for the curtain corridor where his paintings are seen, and has made of it one of the most distinguished features of the house. The nine large tympanums containing figures of the

Muses, and the smaller panels, form a comprehensive whole, which is a fine permanent addition to the few very remarkable decorative efforts that stand peerless above the excellent average, made by our artists' great activity.

There is nothing strained or studied about Mr. Simmons's methods. Each bit of painting shows the nervous vital force

Copyright, 1896, by C. S. Pearce. From a Copely Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

LABOUR. By CHARLES SPRAGUE PEARCE.

that allows him, first, to see his purpose in a very large way, and then to carry it into execution rapidly, almost impatiently, leaving life and originality in the train of his hasty brush. He never thinks of ringing variations on past successes, as is too often the case with artists the world over, but is ever in a new mood, and puts his whole personality into it, in a way that leaves no choice in the accomplishment of so versatile a nature. The finest qualities of this masterly piece of work are lost in description; and, to appreciate them properly, the corridor

should be visited again and again. Apart from the skill which has made them such a beautiful portion of a perfect design, the lofty lines on which the images of the Muses are drawn, the striking arrangement of the colour masses, and the large outline of the draperies give a series of pictures that, with but

Copyright, 1896, by Edward Simmons. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

URANIA. By EDWARD SIMMONS.

one or two exceptions, are of a rare dignity. Their conceptions are weighted with the overpowering fatefulness of Greek thought. Their majestic, inscrutable, mysterious presences produce a feeling of awe.

The elements that go toward this end are strikingly simple. The principal figures — sometimes nude, sometimes, as in the case of Clio, clad in a loose cut and fitted gown, or more often with great pieces of drapery flung about them, spreading out and enveloping them like fine cloud forms — do not depend upon interesting accessories to heighten their charms. The

details are of the slightest. One or two cherubs, or wreaths twined of scanty blossoms, in the corners of the arches, the absolutely essential symbolism of mask or globe, is all the artist allows himself; and these are of very minor importance in connection with the all-important personalities, that, in turn, are

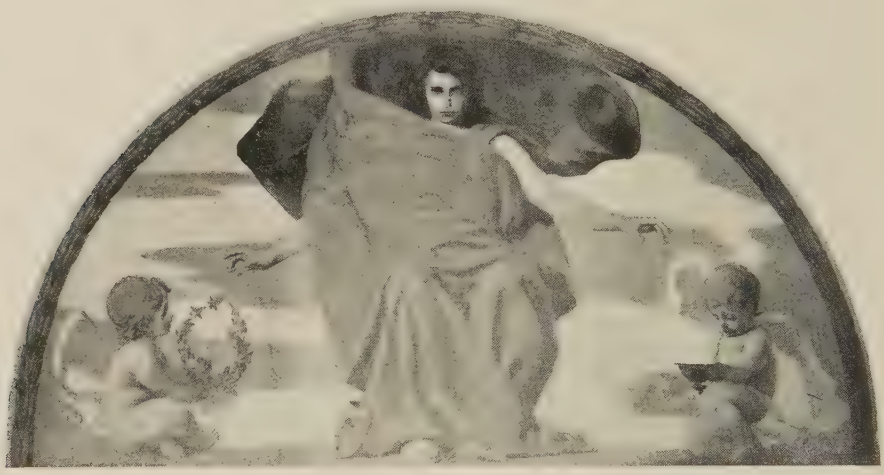
Copyright, 1896, by Edward Simmons. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

CALLIOPE. By EDWARD SIMMONS.

first of all a band of sisters dwelling together in complete unity and harmony.

Notice the magnificent Calliope, with outstretched white arms and bared chest, her head poised like a flower upon the pillar of her neck. A shadow half covers her face, her lips are parted as though chanting the long measures of the Odyssey or the Iliad. As she sits there, surrounded by voluminous blue folds, she seems as vividly, as vitally a personality as any living soul. And the beautiful Melpomene, original and daring image,— her tragic countenance appears framed in the swirls of

the rose-red cloak that is her garment; her hands are parted in a commanding gesture; the mask that lies at her feet is not more inscrutable than the expression of her downcast face. The colour partakes of the breadth which is the life of the series, and is varied without clashing,—in tones of blue, red, orange, grey, and gold.



Copyright, 1896, by Edward Simmons. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

MELPOMENE. By EDWARD SIMMONS.

Agreeable sensations only are experienced in passing from Mr. Simmons's splendid achievement to the corridor in which Henry Oliver Walker's paintings, which are grouped under the general title of *Lyric Poetry*, are found; for here, also, the artist's presentation is most satisfying. The sincerity and refinement which mark all that Mr. Walker undertakes make his simple methods seem the most fitting vehicle possible for the conveyance of his ideas, and cast a shade of commonness over more brilliant technical displays, that are not animated by so fine a spirit.

Copyright, 1896, by H. O. Walker.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

LYRIC POETRY. By HENRY OLIVER WALKER.

In the largest tympanums where *Lyric Poetry* is represented, the figures are placed in a landscape that has the character, without realism,—for it is purely decorative,—of having been drawn from some lovely natural spot, where a brook flows between banks covered with grasses and plants, and the trees above part to show the distant sky. A young girl representing

Copyright, 1897, by H. O. Walker. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE BOY OF WINANDER. By HENRY OLIVER WALKER.

the title stands in the depression of the bed of the little stream. She holds a lyre, her head is crowned with laurels, and the expression of her face is dreamy and absorbed. On the left are *Pathos*, *Truth*, and *Devotion;* on the right, *Passion*, *Beauty*, and *Mirth*. The gracefully poised figure of *Passion* is a rare and most beautiful rendering of a most difficult subject. The tenderly poetic feeling which pervades this canvas runs through the series.

A fear arises, in praising the smaller tympanums for their

literary interest, that, with the prevailing ideas of "art for art's sake," this may be construed into the notion that Mr. Walker has descended from the most elevated professional principles; but such is not the case, for the paintings are neither story-telling nor pictorial, but are embodiments of the poet's creations carried out in a strictly decorative manner, and they are as fine

Copyright, 1897, by H. O. Walker. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

GANYMEDE. By HENRY OLIVER WALKER.

in place as they are enjoyable and exquisitely reflective of the thought by which they were inspired. The attention of any well-read person, however ignorant of their artistic merit, or of any person of artistic tastes, however unused to reading poetry, will be equally attracted by them. There lurks no danger here of tendencies which might lower painting from her high estate into the position of a handmaid of literature. The form of Mr. Walker's expression, both in the controlled harmony of the whole scheme and in individual beauties, is far too interesting

from a purely artistic point of view for that. And the thought is stimulated, the mind refreshed, the æsthetic perceptions satisfied, by such ideals as those shown in the panels, where the beautiful nude Adonis lies stretched upon the ground, fair, mournful image of Shakespeare's lover; the quaint Boy of Winander, vision of Wordsworth's musings; the wicked Comus

Copyright, 1897, by H. O. Walker. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

ADONIS By HENRY OLIVER WALKER.

skulking through the woods, as in Milton's masque; and the lad Endymion, of whom Keats sang, reclining upon a hillside, with the young moon shining upon him.

Certain of the corridors may be more strikingly attractive, the decorations show greater powers or a more masterly technique; but this is a place to dream in, a place to love. The refinement and sentiment of the soft grey canvases, lightened with delicate blushes of colour, convey a feeling of peace, of repose, of intellectual calm. The atmosphere is not common:

it is the one that poets have loved better than the garish light of noonday.

Up to this time John W. Alexander had confined himself to portrait painting, but his choice was felt to be an excellent one, for his broad and vigorous style gave assurance that he possessed the qualities necessary for successful mural painting; and, although he has not sprung at once into an equality with his brilliant performance of past years, the corridor devoted to *The Evolution of the Book* challenges the admiration to such an extent that continued opportunity only seems needed to lift Mr. Alexander's reputation as a decorator into the rank which he has already won by his portraits.

The subject is specially pleasing; and, from the building of the cairn to the operation of the printing press, he has shown the epochs of literary development. That the treatment is somewhat more illustrative than decorative, is a quite excusable limitation of a first endeavour. The atmosphere and character of each of the compositions is exceedingly well defined. The vitality which is so remarkable in the artist's portraits, making them seem like living scenes, and his large masses of light and shade, carry forcibly as far as they can be seen. Their merits are so unusually equal that it is difficult to express a preference; yet, if one might be admitted, this would include *Oral Tradition*, where the hooded and cloaked Arabs encircling their spokesman might have been sketched just as they are when upon some Eastern journey, the *Egyptian Hieroglyphics*, where a workman is chiselling an inscription upon a tomb, a young girl watching his progress from her place in the opposite end of the scaffolding, and *Picture Writing*, where ample justice has been done to the sculpturesque forms of our own

Copyright, 1896, by John W. Alexander. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE CAIRN. By JOHN W. ALEXANDER.

Copyright, 1896, by John W. Alexander. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHICS. By JOHN W. ALEXANDER.

Copyright, 1896, by John W. Alexander. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

ORAL TRADITION. By JOHN W. ALEXANDER.

Copyright, 1896, by John W. Alexander. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

PICTURE WRITING. By JOHN W. ALEXANDER.

Copyright, 1896, by John W. Alexander. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE MANUSCRIPT BOOK. By JOHN W. ALEXANDER.

Copyright, 1896, by John W. Alexander. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE PRINTING-PRESS. By JOHN W. ALEXANDER.

Indians, who are practising their peculiar method of making records. As the corridor is left behind, there is a strong desire to see more in this way from Mr. Alexander's brush; and confidence is felt that he will soon stand among our foremost muralists.

The curtain corridor, matching the one graced by Mr.

Copyright, 1896, by Walter McEwen. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

PARIS. By WALTER McEWEN.

Simmons's Muses, is adorned by Walter McEwen's series, illustrating stories of the Greek heroes.

In choosing notable incidents from the myths woven about Paris, Jason, Bellerophon, Orpheus, Perseus, Prometheus, Theseus, Achilles, and Hercules, a wide range of experiences, adventures, and trials presented themselves. He shows Jason pleading with his friends to join him in the search for the Golden Fleece. The company are seated out of doors. The listeners lounge about a marble bench, behind which rise tall

poplar-trees and a fair prospect. The hero's back is turned, but the gesture made by his hands shows the earnestness with which he makes the appeal.

In a charming woodland where flows a little stream, Orpheus lies dying; and the nymphs who have deemed him their enemy come running toward him, beckoning to each other to hasten

Copyright, 1896, by Walter McEwen. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

PROMETHEUS. By WALTER McEWEN.

to the scene of the sad disaster. At the brilliantly lighted banquet where his kingly foe is feasting, surrounded by his court, Orpheus is seen emerging from the gloom, bearing aloft the head of Medusa, which shall turn their laughter into silence, their living bodies into stone.

Bellerophon, resting in another scene, where woods and water are combined,— the landscapes, indeed, being one of the strongest points of the compositions,— beholds the wingéd horse Pegasus radiant in beams of heavenly light;

and Hercules, a slave to love, is spinning at the feet of his mistress.

These more extraordinary themes are interspersed with quieter and gentler ones,— meetings of friends, lovers, and so on,— so that the tension is not felt to be kept at too high a strain. The variety of the landscapes, and the play of light

Copyright, 1896, by Walter McEwen. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

HERCULES. By WALTER McEWEN.

and shade upon filleted heads and classic robes are particularly admirable. The figures are grouped with skill, and tell the stories agreeably.

The Reading-room reserved for the members of the House of Representatives contains a ceiling, *The Spectrum of Light*, by Carl Gutherz, and two panels in mosaic, executed from designs by Frederick Dielman.

In the chapter on the Walker Art Gallery of Bowdoin College, mention was made of Elihu Vedder's splendid decorative

accomplishment there, with the appreciative admiration which his talents call forth. Among the elder artists there is no more interesting figure. His work appeals to the intellect and the imagination, its symbolism is of a fine order, and, at a time when great laxity prevails under this title, is used with a purity and strictness that is entirely artistic. Although his achievement may vary in excellence, all that passes from his hand is of

Copyright, 1896, by Frederick Dielman. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

LAW. By FREDERICK DIELMAN.

dignity, and maintains standards which require that they shall be taken with seriousness and treated with reverence. The lobby that leads to the Reading-room where his five tympanums are placed is rather dimly lighted. The paintings, formally designed, and in even a more restrained colour scheme than usual, give the impression of ornaments so subtly perfect in place that they could not be more exquisitely suited to the environment. Their elegance of style is notable.

Government is the subject represented in the series: the

composition over the door being devoted to this specially, with *Good Administration* and *Peace* and *Prosperity* on the right, and *Corrupt Legislation* and *Anarchy* on the left. Each one shows three figures; and the centre of the backgrounds is filled by conventionalized trees, either in full leaf or with fruit, or with bare branches making a screen against the sky, as is appropriate to the theme. These, and the loveliness of the

Copyright, 1896, by Frederick Dielman. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

HISTORY. By FREDERICK DIELMAN.

many other details, recall the fact that Mr. Vedder has lived long under the influences of a country filled with the remains of more æsthetic times, when every craftsman was an artist, and the accessories of life were meant to be things of beauty as well as of use. The scales, the vases, musical instruments, et cetera, are all admirable in form.

Yet, when this has been said, when the attention passes from a general survey to a close scrutiny of the separate panels, those who know Mr. Vedder at his best can scarcely suppress

Copyright, 1896, by Elihu Vedder. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

MINERVA (Mosaic). By ELIHU VEDDER.

a feeling of disappointment. Despite the appropriateness of the conceptions, the high character of the symbolism, and the interesting management of sweeping lines, which here, as always, the artist uses in great perfection, the fact will obtrude that there is more of mannerism than of real expression.

The grandeur and mystery which Mr. Vedder's imagination usually casts around his creations, and the grand types of beautiful women whose stately presences have a classic nobility, are quite lacking. The principal figures attitudinise, and their faces are sometimes quite repellently ugly. The figure of *Anarchy*, for which such treatment is allowable, offends less than the others. No amount of attractiveness in the ensemble will make up for the bovine *Good Administration*, or the fat, overmodelled torso and pudgy countenance of the principal figure in *Peace*, *Prosperity*, and *Plenty*.

The panel of *Minerva*, executed in mosaic, on the staircase landing, gives a much more just idea of the artist's abilities. Admitting that the ideal qualities of beauty and strength have escaped Mr. Vedder's grasp on this occasion, yet the series is so excellent as a piece of pure decoration, well understood, dignified, harmonious, that the critical spirit is torn between the knowledge that it falls short of the full measure that the artist can give and admiration for its many perfections. It contributes materially to the beautifying of the Library, to the interest excited by the mural paintings, and to the high rank maintained by the best of them; and it is safe to predict that, whatever alterations will be made in time in the original decorations, when the sensational, the trivial, and the weak will be swept away, the lobby will not, for artistic reasons, require another treatment, but will be held in honour as long as any of the work now existing is preserved.

The inclusion of Mr. Vedder amongst the Library painters was a fine thought on the part of the architect; and we are fortunate in possessing these examples of his handiwork in a public place, where they can be seen by all.

The interest of the whole Library centres in the rotunda. And the dome which is decorated by Edwin Blashfield was the

Copyright, 1896, by Elihu Vedder. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

GOOD ADMINISTRATION. By ELIHU VEDDER.

position of greatest honour in the gift of the architect that could be offered a mural painter for the display of his talents. Although the task was a most difficult one, owing to the lavish ornament of the great room and the richness of the coloured marbles, the toning and the gilding, which combine to make its magnificent effect, yet Mr. Blashfield's designs are so nobly planned that they give the last touch of finish and refinement, and are a most fitting crowning ornament to the majestic lines of the architecture and splendid ensemble of colour. The

subjects represented are: *The Human Understanding* in the crown of the lantern; and the *Evolution of Civilisation* around the collar of the dome, which is twelve feet high and about one hundred and forty feet in circumference, and is at a height of one hundred and twenty-five feet from the floor. The painting was done in place.

Copyright, 1896, by Elihu Vedder. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

GOVERNMENT. By ELIHU VEDDER.

The circular ceiling shows a composition of three figures against a soft, cloudy sky. One, a woman, is lifting a veil from her beautiful intellectual face: she gazes upwards, and seems to be slowly passing into infinite space. Two nude boys float beside her, one holding a closed book, the other beckoning to the figures below. The elusive, *spirituelle* feeling of this group makes it seem like the floating vision of a poetic dream, while the painting below has the strength and force of definite achievement.

There are twelve seated figures, the primary objects of interest in a design composed of many elements, that are combined with a certain formality, and constructed into an unbroken ring of colour and form. The centre of each quarter of the space is marked by a figure clad principally in white, drawn in full

Copyright, 1896, by E. H. Blashfield.

DETAILS FROM THE EVOLUTION OF CIVILISATION.

face and very erect posture. The lines of those on either side lean toward it, and they are a little subordinated by the lower tones in which their garments are painted. At equal distances between the seats are cartouches upon which are printed the names of the epochs or countries to which the civilisation of the world is owing, and banderoles run below them, explaining the nature of the service. Where the background appears, it is laid in a mosaic pattern; but most of it is covered between and below the figures by the objects mentioned, and above by the large white wings that give an element of the

ideal to the band of fair women and strong men, the pinions overlapping each other making a broad sweep of white. Even when the various attributes grouped with each personage are taken into consideration, there is no confusion or crowding: nothing obtrudes. The eyes follow around the circle, not know-

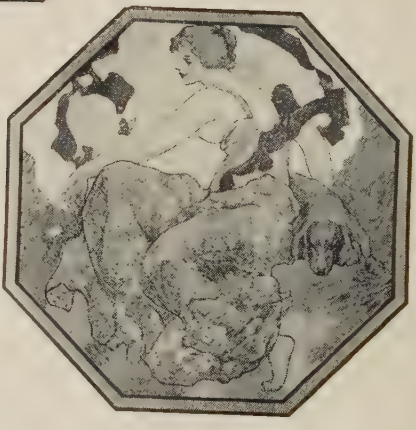
From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

By EDWIN H. BLASHFIELD.

ing where to stop, so artfully is the composition woven together.

Taking the central figures of each quarter circle, with the words upon the banderoles included in parentheses, in chronological order, Egypt — *Written Records* — comes first. His bronze shoulders and limbs are bare, his strong typical face is framed in the familiar ancient head-dress of striped material, he holds the sign of immortality and a tablet inscribed with hieroglyphics. On his right is America,— *Science*,— a workingman with a dynamo, who brings the series to an end; on his

left, Judea,— *Religion*,— with hands uplifted in an attitude of prayer. Rome — *Administration* —marks the next curve, a powerful soldier, leaning upon a bundle of fasces, with the bâton of command in his hand. To the right is Greece,— *Philosophy*,— with lamp and scroll; to the left Islam,— *Physics*,— reading from a book, with his foot resting upon a glass retort. Beyond is the very lovely Italy,— *The Fine Arts*,— whose face was drawn from Mary Anderson Navarro. She sits with brush and palette in her hands, and a violin and a statuette of Michael Angelo's *David* on a pedestal beside her. On her right is the Middle Ages,— *Modern Languages;* on her left, Germany,— *The Art of Printing*. The head of the inventor is a portrait of General Thomas Lincoln Casey. This brings around the last trio, distinguished by England,— *Literature*,— a most graceful likeness of Ellen Terry. A large volume is held open upon her knees, showing the title-page of the first edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. To the right is Spain,— *The Discoverer*,— a bold buccaneer, with a model of a caravel at his feet; to the left, France,— *Emancipation*,— sitting upon a cannon, holding out the proclamation of *Les droits de l'homme*. The tone throughout is kept very light. Masses of white, bluish-green, and violet predominate; and, though there is a good deal of variety in the colour of the draperies, these are used with a harmony that makes the composition tell distinctly and with breadth at whatever distance it is viewed.



Copyright, 1896, by Robert Reid.

From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1899, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE FIVE SENSES. By ROBERT REID.

XI. THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. *Conclusion.*

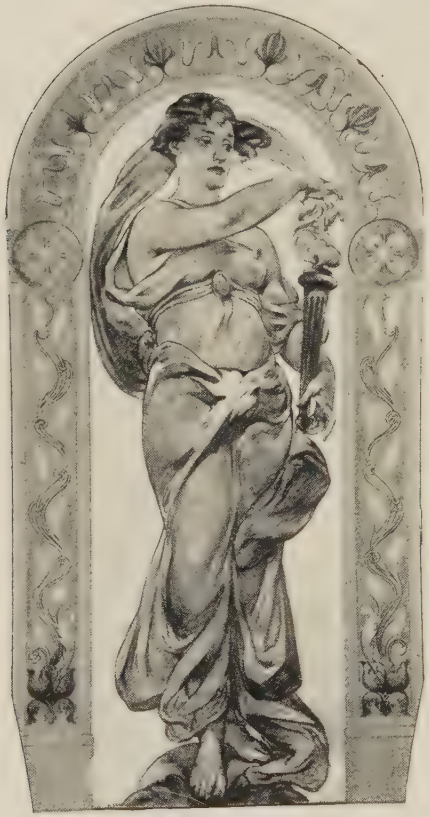
The second floor staircase corridors are loftier and more richly adorned than those of the first; and round, octagon, and oblong panels take the place of the unvarying tympanums of the lower story. In the North Corridor, Robert Reid's five octagons in the ceiling show *The Senses*, under the guise of graceful young women, with slender figures and long limbs. Their pretty faces are distinctly modern in type, and their carelessly arranged draperies suggest very æsthetic negligées.

They lounge in easy attitudes: *Taste* drinking from a shell; *Sight* gazing at her image in a small mirror, a peacock, whose great tail falls to her feet, preening himself over her shoulder; *Smell*, a luxuriant beauty resting by a bank of lilies and roses, her face half buried in a large flower, another in her hair showing coquettishly behind her ear; *Hearing*, listening to the sound held in a sea-shell; and *Feeling*, watching a butterfly flit delicately along her extended arm.

The four circular panels on the wall continue these gay and pleasing images; and, though the slightness of the painting, which is fairly tantalising in its half-suggestion, is to be regretted, yet the ability with which the artist has composed each figure or half-figure in the space, his charming, if elusive, scheme of colour, and the decorative aims to which he has subordinated all other interests make the series one of artistic value.

The passage allotted to Walter Shirlaw gave him eight

large panels in the spandrels of the arches, in which he has placed full-length female figures considerably over life-size.



Copyright, 1896, by Walter Shirlaw. From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1899, by Curtis & Cameron.

PHYSICS AND BOTANY. By WALTER SHIRLAW.

Here, as always, Mr. Shirlaw is thoroughly serious and earnest, and with his well-known manner of working with large sweeping lines and highly developed forms has produced designs that are powerful and sculpturesque. The Sciences are represented with regard to the building up of images that shall in

each case be suited to the subject, this depending more on the character of every detail, than on the types and expressions of the faces, though these are never out of keeping. The painting of *Zoölogy* is marked by a feeling of animal strength and leonine ruggedness. The symbolical figure is of ponderous mould: she has the skin of a wild beast drawn over her hair, which descends to form her sole garment, and is holding an enormous lion by his mane. *Physics* carries a flaming torch and stands in a springing attitude, which the lines of her flowing drapery accentuate. *Mathematics*, only partly draped, is drawn with severe outlines, all curves and sweeping lines being combined to an angular precision. *Botany* stands upon a lily pad, and the long stems of the flowers that she holds against her bosom twine around her body. Her garments are suggestive of the form of a half-opened flower. The same thoughtful spirit which animates these examples, runs through the whole work.

The colour is more restrained than is usual with Mr. Shirlaw, whose fondness for mellow tones often leads to an effect that is unpleasantly hot; and, wherever possible, hues bearing a resemblance to those connected with the science have been chosen. While making the panels the central point of interest, their harmonious relation with their environment has been exceedingly well considered.

In the East Corridor the paintings are by George Barse, Jr.

The decorations by Frank Benson, in the fourth hallway, are in rondels and octagons, similar to those signed by Mr. Reid, save that a difference in the ornament of the ceiling allows only three instead of five panels. The series is indeed one of the brightest among the groups of stars that make the glory of the Library.

The Graces are shown in the ceiling. Entirely free from any binding traditions of classicism, the three simple white-clad figures tell with distinct picturesqueness in the completely charming landscape in which they are placed. Each canvas is done with the indescribable distinction that lies in the artist's style, which combines with the first impression of breadth and boldness a remarkable refinement of both colour and form,

Copyright, 1896, by F. W. Benson. From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

AGLAIA AND THALIA (PANELS). BY FRANK W. BENSON.

and allows him to present his feminine creations with striking personalities, and yet dowered with the subtle charm that is as distinctly the attribute of certain lovely women as the perfume that belongs to flowers.

Aglaia, Thalia, and Euphrosyne are pleasant names to be given to young maidens who wander abroad with crooks, lyres, and mirrors; but these delicate figures have clearly been inspired by high-bred American girls, whose beauty is as much intellectual as physical. They are recognisable portraits of

well-known types, belonging to the class to which is due the wide-spread fame of the attractiveness of our countrywomen. It seems astonishing that our artists, surrounded as they are by lovely faces and forms that are the admiration of the world, rarely seem to have noticed them, but repeat formal types and the faces of studio-beauties common the world over. And we are therefore the more indebted to Mr. Benson for his presen-

Copyright, 1896, by F. W. Benson.

From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

SPRING AND WINTER (PANELS). BY FRANK W. BENSON.

tation of these fine and distinguished likenesses of contemporary womanhood.

The half-figures in the circles are rendered in the same spirit: *Winter*, with her wind-blown hair; *Autumn*, standing before a lowering sky and bare landscape; *Summer*, flower-crowned and flower-laden, framed in branches; loveliest *Spring*, as dainty as the rosebud she holds in her fingers.

George W. Maynard's panels at the ends of the hall are also important factors in the decorative ensemble. There are eight

Copyright, 1896, by Kenyon Cox.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE ARTS. By KENYON COX.

Copyright, 1896, by Kenyon Cox.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE SCIENCES. By KENYON COX.

in all, *Fortitude*, *Justice*, *Patriotism*, *Courage*, *Temperance*, *Prudence*, *Industry*, and *Concord* being represented by elegant and graceful figures painted on flat backgrounds in the artist's characteristic Pompeian style, which has frequently had appreciative mention in the course of this volume.

The gallery that contains the lunettes *The Arts* and *The Sciences* by Kenyon Cox is designed for museum purposes, and is suitably plain in design, with rows of windows set as closely together as possible along its length to admit a powerful stream of light. In such an illuminated interior it is difficult to keep decorations from looking dark and spotty; but Mr. Cox has avoided this by painting in a very high key, with extremely light shadows,— a scheme which, in the hands of one less skilful technically, would have been formless and tame.

The compositions are distinctly formal, each showing five adults and three children, arranged in three groups. The central figure is seated upon a throne with two attendant boys before her. They are separated from the others by flaming tripods that are placed just above the pilasters on the walls, and carry on their lines. In the lunette called *The Arts* the enthroned *Poetry* holds a lyre and gazes upwards. The two nude children on the steps at her feet are drawn with masterly knowledge of the construction of youthful bodies, and the grace and beauty that belongs to the age. On the right *Sculpture* and *Painting* lean against each other in sisterly attitudes. On the left are *Architecture* and *Music*, the latter playing the violin. The nobility of her face, her fine pose, and the interesting arrangement of her drapery make her a notable figure. A child kneels before her, holding the music book from which she reads.

Copyright, 1896, by William B. Van Ingen.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE STATE. By WILLIAM B. VAN INGEN.

Copyright, 1896, by Gari Melchers.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

PEACE. By GARI MELCHERS.

The necessity of using much white in the colour to attain the high key desired, has not, as is too often the case, cheapened the tones beyond artistic limits; and the pale sky and the delicate rose-yellow of several hues, and terra-cotta, employed here, as well as the blues and greens in the companion painting, are in harmony with the tone of the room and distinguished ornaments of it. In the lunette *The Sciences*, *Astronomy*, in the centre, leans forward with a compass in her hand to measure a celestial globe that is held by another of the artist's band of beautiful children; another child is looking through a telescope. In the right-hand group *Botany*, clad in a tight-fitting gown of green and gold brocade, holds a large oak branch; *Zoölogy*, seen in back view, petting a peacock, is one of the most charming that Mr. Cox has ever designed. It is balanced by *Physics* and *Mathematics*, the latter teaching a child who leans against her knees.

In another gallery, constructed on similar lines, Gari Melchers's lunettes of *Peace* and *War* are seen. The latter calls to mind the artist's treatment of the same subject at the Columbian Exposition. The second essay is a most creditable development. The figures are more solidly drawn and more pleasing in colour, and their arrangement is better. *Peace* shows a religious procession that has halted in a light wood, while the priest, at the head of it, is reading some ritual for the occasion. A small image of the goddess, who is the object of devotion, is borne aloft on the shoulders of her devotees; and others of the train carry votive offerings and lead a bull decked with garlands for the sacrifice. The costumes suggest a very early classic period. Each figure is drawn with a regard for distinct character, and the impression is a picturesque one.

War teems with vigorous action. The dogs of war strain in their collars. Horsemen, with stern, set faces, press their steeds to great exertions, trampling the dead and dying under their hoofs. The body of a dead warrior is carried on a litter, and a crowd of foot soldiers hasten along. The feeling proper to the two subjects is expressed in this admirable contrast; and Mr. Melchers's method of painting in broad flat tones, which is rather suggestive of fresco work, upon which it is probably modelled, makes an effective decoration.

The four pavilions by George W. Maynard, Robert L. Dodge, William B. Van Ingen, with Elmer E. Garnsey, and William De L. Dodge, suffer from the very awkward shape of the four tympanums which surmount their walls, these being exceedingly long and quite low at the greatest height,— trying proportions to fill in an artistic manner.

Mr. Maynard on this occasion has replaced his favourite style by one suggestive of heraldic designing. The same composition is repeated in each arch, three female figures drawn with much richness of details and accessories being placed in the centre, with smaller figures or objects of interest in the extreme corners. The distance between is filled with the names of celebrated men connected with *Adventure*, *Discovery*, *Conquest*, and *Civilisation*, the subjects represented. Despite the elaborateness of the effort, the design of the ceiling is quite wonderfully so. The achievement is not one to raise the estimate of the artist's talents. One misses the elegance and gracious dignity of his simpler work.

Robert L. Dodge follows a somewhat similar method of design.

The compositions depicting the Departments of the Gov-

Copyright, 1896, by George W. Maynard. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

CEILING. By GEORGE W. MAYNARD.

ernment, in the pavilion allotted to William B. Van Ingen, as well as his panels *L' Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, placed near the entrance to the rotunda, succeed by their notable colour quality. The former seems rather an appalling collection of subjects, but the artist has treated them in a novel and interesting

manner. A large circular tablet in the centre of each space permits two distinct groups, which make a decidedly æsthetic

Copyright, 1896, by William De L. Dodge.

AMBITION (Ceiling). By WILLIAM De L. DODGE.

impression, the figures of women are handsome, and the introduction of national monuments and buildings gives interest to the backgrounds. The employment of full deep tones, the massing of warm shadows, and the clear brilliant lights make

the walls glow with pure, radiant colour, amid which the hues of violet, rose, and green are recalled as having special beauty.

The room also has a ceiling disk by Mr. Garnsey that is an exquisite piece of conventional decoration.

It will be remembered that at the Columbian Exposition William De L. Dodge painted an enormous composition that was remarkable for spirit; and, working in this smaller space, he shows the same vigour and energy. He has scattered ideas with a liberal hand, and the tympanums *Literature*, *Music*, *Science*, and *Art* are filled with a number of figures. These, however, are secondary in interest to the striking painting of *Ambition*, which adorns the ceiling. Here there are two groups arranged at the edges of a circular sky. One shows a nude woman, who holds aloft a crown. She rides upon a great wingèd horse: his bridle is held by another woman, blowing a trumpet. The three are drawn in the most violent perspective, as if they were seen from below, careering through the air. An enormous drapery floating from the horse connects them with the lower group of dissatisfied seekers after the glittering crown of ambition,— men and women with hands outstretched trying to snatch the bauble held beyond their reach. Their bodies are contorted with passion. One lies dead: the last of all is a jester with his cap and bells.

As one after another the different subjects of this review have been passed in order, the conviction has deepened that their value in forming together a representative exhibition of the art of our time cannot be overestimated. The place is one to call up serious thoughts, not only of the present and its conditions, but of the possibilities that lie in the future. In a great national monument like this it may be confidently

expected that the noble achievements of artists yet unborn will be gradually gathered, until the steps of a long and honourable artistic history may be seen in its rooms and corridors. Any part of the original decoration that is too poor or feeble to stand the final test that time alone can give, will soon be swept away and replaced; but much is worthy to remain,—a permanent exposition which will tell greatly to the credit of the painters of the last decade of the nineteenth century.

XII. THE APPELLATE COURTS BUILDING, NEW YORK

When engaged upon the building of this edifice, the architect, James Brown Lord, met the overtures of the Society of Mural Painters in a friendly spirit, as has been said,* and accepted the offer of advice concerning the decorations. Joseph Lauber, Chairman of the Committee on Civic Buildings, who had zealously advanced the matter and was one of the artists engaged to decorate the court-room, has given the following interesting account of the first steps taken in the co-operation.

"A programme for the decoration of that building was prepared by the Committee, approved by the Society, and adopted by the architect and the Building Committee, and made part of the specifications under which it was constructed, with but slight modifications.

"The principal conditions of the programme may be summarised as follows: that the artists chosen for the work should form a committee, meet and formulate a general scheme of decoration, each submitting a rough draft of his portion of the work; the artists then to receive the commission to execute a sketch in colour at a scale agreed upon, this scale to be adhered to by all concerned. The sketches to be finished at a given date and passed on by the Committee together with the architect and such arbiter as they may choose. If any artist failed or proved unwilling to adopt the suggestions of the majority in regard to alterations in the interest of an harmonious scheme, he was to retire, and another chosen in his

* See Chapter VIII.

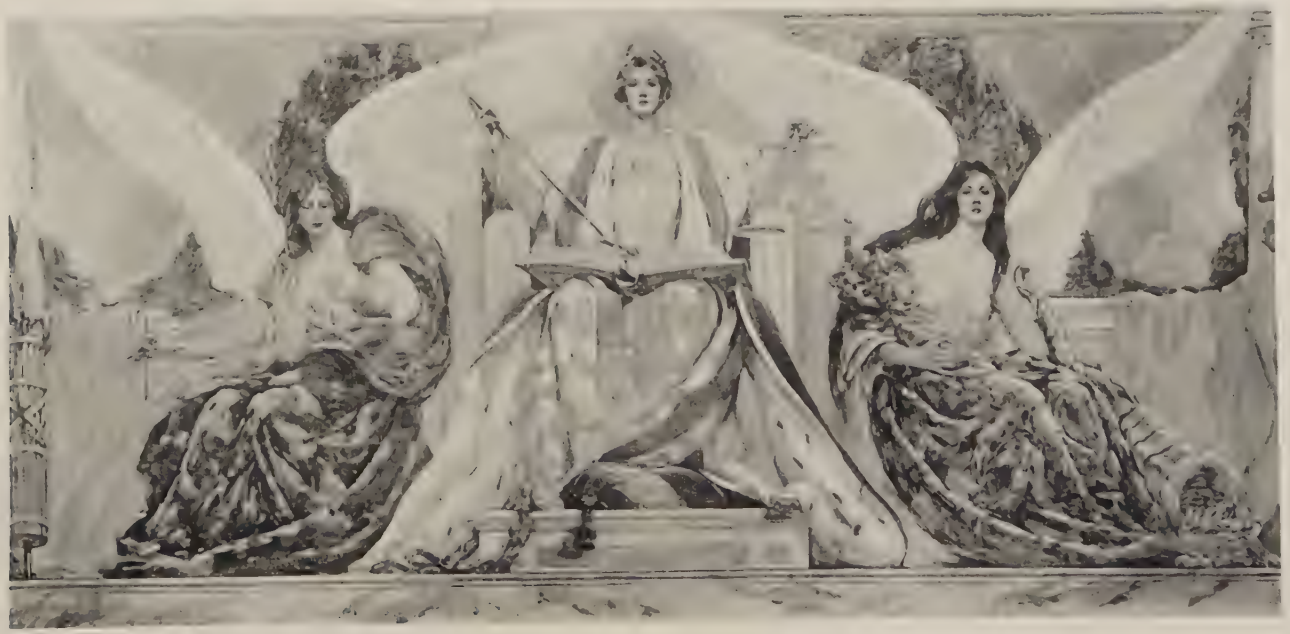
place. Similar conditions were to prevail during the progress of the work, decided differences of opinion being submitted to the arbiter whose decision was to be final. After the work was placed, each man was to be given time to harmonise his work with the room. The conditions of the programme affected

Copyright, 1899, by H. Siddons Mowbray. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1900, by Curtis & Cameron.

DETAIL FROM THE TRANSMISSION OF THE LAW. BY H. SIDDONS MOWBRAY.

equally the members of the Society engaged in the work as well as non-members. . . .

. . . "The painters . . . at their first meeting chose the Nestor of the profession, John La Farge, as their referee or arbiter. The artist selected by the architect to design and execute the windows and dome light was placed under obligations to confer with the confrères of the brush; and the architect also invited suggestions from those whose work adjoined the ceiling, which was executed entirely under his direction."



Copyright, 1899, by Robert Reid.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1900, by Curtis & Cameron.

JUSTICE (Detail). By ROBERT REID.

The result challenges our respect for the principles on which the plan was based. The work of ten artists in the small space of two rooms might have produced the impression of a picture exhibition, where the canvases expressing individual intentions, and painted for these ends alone, are in the utmost discord when grouped together and annihilate each other's beauties. The needs of the business of the court and the appropriations made for the house defined the extent of its proportions; and Mr. Lord built a very dignified, three-story marble structure in the free classic style upon the not very large lot purchased for the purpose. The exterior is adorned with some fine sculptured groups and figures by Daniel Chester French, Philip Martiny, J. Scott Hartley, Herbert Adams, and others; and in the interior, which is a model of convenience, a great deal of attention was paid to finishing the well-proportioned rooms in the best possible taste.

Although the entrance-hall and court-room, where the mural paintings are massed, cannot rival, in proportions or display, many of the apartments in the ambitious buildings mentioned in this volume, they have a distinction which is something finer than the regal magnificence that is dependent upon an extravagant outlay. The materials used are very rich, indeed; but the richness is not conspicuous, it is lost in the impression of completeness and distinguished elegance that carries the conviction that we are beginning to take even our magnificence easily.

The hallway is light and warm in tone, being lined with yellow marble from the mosaic floor up to the line of the frieze, which is about four feet in height, and runs around three sides; the ceiling is modelled in heavy relief, gilded in two

Copyright, 1899, by W. L. Metcalf.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1900, by Curtis & Cameron.

JUSTICE (Detail). By WILLARD L. METCALF.

shades of gold. The most notable feature here — which is not surpassed by any performance of the band of painters — is *The Transmission of the Law*, by H. Siddons Mowbray, which passes around the elevator shaft and the walls of the staircases on either side. It may be seen plainly that the artist's intention has been to make a beautiful band of ornament, that would tell in a distinctly decorative way. He has used with most interesting effect the word *lex*, printed in large gilt letters upon a dark blue background; and across this deep tone are placed a rhythmic line of figures, in groups that typify different periods of the law, and lovely wingéd maidens that symbolise its transmission from century to century.

The drawing is of the utmost delicacy, and the symbolical women are exquisitely refined types. A good deal of low-toned white, both in their outstretched pinions and in the marble seats, pillars, and thrones between them, break up the solid blue. The drapery colours are pure and fresh without being bright, and are rather flatly painted; and the modelling is in a low relief. From end to end not one discordant note breaks the subtle æsthetic harmony.

The different periods of Mosaic, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Norman, Common, and Modern Law, are each made the subject of a little composition, which is very interesting, even when considered apart from its fellows. For the keynote here is, that every part, though subordinate to the general effect, shall be absolutely perfect in itself. The Roman law-giver is seated upon a throne of polished variegated marble. A red mantle is draped about his athletic figure: he wears a richly chased corselet, and holds a sword and ball, beside him stands a soldier, helmeted, and with shield and standard.

The Byzantine figures are drawn with all the delightful naïveté that charms us in the paintings and mosaics of the period. The standing figure of the priest, with shaven head, his green gown bordered with a broad conventionalized pattern, and his golden stole embroidered in a fine design, might have stepped from the pages of an early Christian missal. The Greeks, wise elderly men, are grouped against the base of two supporting columns. A statue of Pallas Athene stands between them.

And so one set of forms succeeds another, connected by the graceful female figures, whose wings break across the upper part of the canvas, carrying on the lines from one group to the next.

Robert Reid's frieze, on the right hand side, is a very successful piece of decoration. In the large division, Justice is represented, supported by the Guardians of the Law, the one on the left with a sword, the one on the right with the fasces, giving Peace and Prosperity to the Arts and Sciences. In the colour scheme masses of a clear lovely blue are notable, lightened with warm whites, and with just the needed emphasis of darker shades and contrasting tones. This harmonises most pleasingly with the surrounding yellow of the marble and the gilded ceiling, much white, blue, green, and violet being mingled in the draperies of the figures, that radiate from the central group of three women: Justice upon her throne, with a great book on her knees, and an ermine mantle of most royal fulness sweeping from her dainty shoulders to the floor, disclosing her fair neck and brocaded gown; and her companions who sit below her, one holding a babe, the other with a large cornucopia,— their great white wings nearly meeting above their heads. Mr. Reid has given a certain elegance to

all the women's figures by making them exceedingly tall, with small heads and slender throats. *Drama* holding a mask, and *Music* leaning against a harp, are especially charming. The same scheme of colour is continued in the panel on the southern wall, where *Poetry*, *Painting*, *Sculpture*, *Architecture*, and *Fame* are symbolised.

Mr. Turner's *Law* and *Equity*, above the entrance doors, are not so advantageously placed or lighted as one would wish to see the work of this able artist. Each panel shows a wingéd female standing erect, with one hand upraised, in an attitude of great dignity, a nude child sits at her feet. The treatment is restrained to create an intelligent decorative effect, and the colouring is full and varied.

The frieze on the left, by Willard L. Metcalf, occupying the space similar to Mr. Reid's,— with its dramatic and realistic tendencies, suffers by contrast with the rest of the room; but the standard set is so very high that it would be impossible for every one to reach it. And this, we believe, was Mr. Metcalf's first attempt at decoration, or, at any rate, on such an ambitious scale.

The court-room opening out to the right is distinctly impressive in character. It is also wainscoted with Siena marble divided by pilasters with bronze gold capitals, and is lighted by a dome and windows of pale green and opal glass, the work of Maitland Armstrong & Company. The ornamental ceiling is also richly gilded. The architect's distinguished judgment has been shown in making the whole ornament of the room centre upon its legal character. The frieze takes its ordinary place in the architectural design upon three sides of the room; but upon the east wall the marble is reduced to a low wain-

scot admitting three large, almost square panels, placed side by side, wherein the beautiful paintings by Edward Simmons, Edwin H. Blashfield, and Henry Oliver Walker confront the Justice's bench with a dignity that pervades the entire apartment. And what a marvellous seat of justice it is that they face,—a great mass of black oak richly carved over dais and benches, with a magnificent screen to match rising behind, and covering the wall to the frieze.

Mr. Walker's composition occupies the middle place; across the top of the background is printed:

DOTH NOT WISDOM CRY
AND UNDERSTANDING PUT FORTH HER VOICE
BY ME PRINCES RULE AND NOBLES
EVEN ALL THE JUDGES OF THE EARTH

And, beneath it on the painted border which surrounds the canvas is

WISDOM
ATTENDED BY LEARNING EXPERIENCE HUMILITY AND LOVE
AND BY FAITH PATIENCE DOUBT AND INSPIRATION

Mr. Walker, as has been said before when considering his series in the Congressional Library, succeeds by an individual charm, by elevated sentiment and poetic feeling. The size of the canvas under discussion was rather a strain upon his simple methods; yet the subject is carried out with a dignity that confirms the judgment that, whether in easel pictures or decorations, his work always touches a high standard of art and has an ennobling and exalting influence.

The figures are grouped upon some steps that lead up to the seat of Wisdom. She stands before it, rising above the

Copyright, 1899, by H. O. Walker. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1900, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE WISDOM OF THE LAW. By HENRY OLIVER WALKER.

Copyright, 1899, by Edward Simmons. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1900, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE JUSTICE OF THE LAW. By EDWARD SIMMONS.

Copyright, 1900, by E. H. Blashfield.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1900, by Curtis & Cameron.

THE POWER OF THE LAW. By EDWIN H. BLASHFIELD.

others. Her hands outstretched, suggesting that she is inspired to speak and is hushing her audience. Her finely developed figure is clad in white, and a mantle of green falls from her shoulders. Her face is of an interesting type of beauty,—gentle, soulful, and womanly. Before her stands a nude boy with wings, around her gather various symbolical figures. In the foreground, on the left, is a very fine group of a half-nude angelic being, poised on one foot with a blue drapery swirling about him, and delicate pointed wings that rise nearly to the top of the canvas. He is pointing upwards while he touches a despairing comrade who, with downcast look, crouches on the lowest step. The colouring is tenderly grey: the yellow, blue, green, and pink draperies are all refined into the neutral tone; and neither there, nor in the flesh tones or hair are there any strong contrasts: the management of an effect that is most restrained, yet has no monotony, but gains an artistic quality from the grace with which it wears its bonds, being one of Mr. Walker's special gifts.

The panels on either side are much more complex in every way. It is clearly seen that they have been arranged as pendants. The mosaic backgrounds are alike; the heads of the principal figures are about on the same level, and both are balanced by floating forms in the upper part of the canvas and children holding shields in the lower corners. The one on the left bears the explanatory lines on the moulding,—

THE JUSTICE OF THE LAW

JUSTICE STANDS FLANKED BY PEACE AT HER LEFT · PLENTY AT HER RIGHT
PEACE RECOILS FROM BRUTE FORCE WITHHELD BY FEAR · PLENTY ASSISTS THE NEEDY
LABOUR BEHIND HER HAILS JUSTICE · MERCY (A CHILD) IN THE FOREGROUND

Edward Simmons's ever-clever brush has been used here in a very sympathetic way, and has made a most lovely human picture that appeals to the heart and strikes the chord that makes the whole world kin. We are reminded that Justice is not always majestic and fearful, but has a side wherein she is filled with mercy and kindness, so that she can be easily approached by the most timorous, when her protecting arms will fold softly around weak women and tender babes, and the widow and the orphan will find help and succour at her hands. The three women that form the central group are fair creatures of distinctly modern types. They stand together as though Justice was the older, protecting sister. Crouching close beside her is frightened Peace, a fair vision with her doves clasped to her breast, and a stalk of lilies,— emblem of purity. Falling at her feet, the flowered robe that hangs from her shoulders, and Plenty's garments of similar fabric, make a superb frame of colour around Justice's white robe. In the foreground on the left is a dark-haired young mother, clad in black, holding her baby in her arms and accepting fruits from Plenty's well-filled lap. At her feet sits Mercy in the guise of a tiny child, who fondles a large white rabbit and a fox. This small person is an image of sweet, childish innocence, worthy of a place amongst the bambinos that the Old Masters used to draw with their pets attending them. The colour is so extraordinarily handsome, the clear blue of the mosaic background, the brunette, blond, and red blond types of the three principal figures, the masses of delicate whites of the silver and gold brocade that Peace and Plenty wear, and the lifelike way in which the flesh is painted, make a rare ensemble. Without exaggeration the treatment may be spoken of as masterly. Not

only is the painting a brilliant and individual performance, but the beauty of the sentiment is sweet to the eyes and endears it to the memory.

The legend beneath the right-hand panel reads: —

THE POWER OF THE LAW

THE LAW DRAWS HER SWORD IN BEHALF OF APPEAL; ON EITHER SIDE SHE IS SUPPORTED BY MAGISTRATES AND FIGURES TYPIFYING ROMAN LAW, CANON LAW, AND COMMON (ANGLO-SAXON) LAW

Two floating female figures enveloped in swirling draperies fill the upper part of the canvas, holding a golden circlet over the head of the strong, stern Justice, whose awful and determined countenance would strike terror to the guilty, and uphold the faith of the innocent. She wears armour upon her shoulders and breast over a clinging white garment, and holds a half-drawn sword. This majestic personage towers above a woman of the poorer class, who kneels in the foreground, her arms flung up in an appeal for help: the representatives of the law that stand about cast looks of interest upon the suppliant. Each one of these male figures is a study in itself. The heads are carefully characteristic portraits, and the picturesque garments which mark their vocations and nationalities give an interesting variety of form and colour. On the left of Justice stands the Anglo-Saxon with benign countenance, full-bearded, and with heavy locks that hang upon his shoulders: he is robed in cloth of gold. Next him is a bishop, the very type of an old churchman, subtle, wily, and diplomatic, his quaint figure gathering height from the long straight folds of his magnificent brocaded robe of office. Opposite them is a high-bred young Roman, a very classic figure as he stands with a scroll half-hid-

Copyright, 1899, by Kenyon Cox.

From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1900, by Curtis & Cameron.

PANELS FROM FRIEZE. By KENYON COX.

den in his toga. Over his shoulder peers a solemn countenance in a horse-hair wig. At the end of each of these groups stands a magistrate in ordinary Doctor's gown, the ample dark material making just the deepened note that gives strength and contrast to the colour scheme. The whole feeling of the painting is impressive dignity, which the artist has evidently conveyed by every means that the study of art can teach; and the result is so completely satisfactory that it would seem impossible to make the same number of figures in the given space represent the subject more ably.

In this case, undoubtedly, Mr. Blashfield has signed the finest piece of mural painting which his busy hands have yet completed,— the culmination of years of study and experience, in which he has gone steadily forward, until here he has added to a composition which is a model of beauty and fitness: a standard of workmanship and a finished style that is noticeable in every particular. The strength and beauty of the achievement lies neither in the drawing nor the colour nor the character, but in them all.

The frieze along the western wall, crossing above the dais of the Justices, by Kenyon Cox, carries on the high standard of these three paintings. From the very long and narrow space at his disposal the problem of arranging the figures was a somewhat difficult one, which he solved by placing them seated along a low stone coping. He also divided the length into five panels, the central one, containing a conventionalised scroll, bearing the title *Law Reigns*. On the right are *Peace and Commerce*, the least successful of the series, and *Plenty Rewarding Industry*, which is by far the most interesting. The woman that leans against the tall basket of loaves is gracefully drawn

and most easily and pleasantly composed; and the nude man to whom she is handing a loaf is a superb piece of drawing and modelling. The wreaths containing emblems in the corners of each panel add a decorative touch that is most effective. The frieze is continued by two well-balanced compositions, each showing a central figure supported by two nude boys and half-reclining figures at the sides. Mr. Cox's drawings of beautiful children have been noticed before, and these little ones rival those in his lunettes, in the Congressional Library. The boy holding the ballot box is a most lovely image of childhood. The symbolical figures of Law, Liberty, Freedom, etc., are not of much interest when taken separately, and some of their attitudes are rather strained; but together they make a decorative band of form and colour that in its grave and studied way certainly adorns the wall, the lack of individual charm being compensated by dignity and impressiveness.

Upon the wall graced by the imposing triple images of Justice, George W. Maynard painted the arms of the City and the State in the frieze; and the numerous small panels between the pilasters and the windows are by Joseph Lauber.

XIII. MISCELLANEOUS WORK.
1892–1901

Even in the early days of mural painting the owners of hotels were among its first and most liberal patrons; for they recognised that here was a means of adding to the attractiveness of their caravanseries, and for this reason a liberal expenditure for purely ornamental purposes was considered a good investment. But all former efforts were quite thrown into the shade by the scale on which Henry J. Hardenberg was able to give his orders when he built the Waldorf, and afterwards the Astoria adjoining. No pains was spared to make every detail of these luxurious structures as magnificent as possible; and the most costly woodwork, rich gilding, and precious marble were used without stint, so that the rooms are splendid ensembles of colour and ornament, to which the mural paintings give the final elegance. The dining-room in the Waldorf is wainscoted with mahogany, with a heavily-beamed ceiling of the same wood, which was decorated by Frederic Crowninshield.

It was impossible for the artist to cover the whole with one large picture, on account of the position of the beams which divide the space into five separate panels. He made a plan for placing his figures, in oval and round forms of various sizes, upon the three central spaces, which should all hold together in one decorative pattern. In the middle is a large circle. The background is the blue sky, against which a floating woman is poised. Her draperies are green, and a mauve mantle flies out from her shoulders. Beside her a cupid beats upon a tam-

bourine. Above and below this central interest, a smaller circle breaks the uncovered space.

The side panels repeat each other in the arrangement of four small circles around an enormous oval. The backgrounds of the latter are also sky and clouds, and the figures are composed upon the same general plan. At each end are symbolical groups, the most pleasing of which shows a tall woman clad in a pale green garment. She stands very erect, with an urn upon her head, a nude youth kneeling at her feet. At the sides, equally distant from the principal figures, are tripods supported by two partly draped boys. The treatment throughout is conventionalised, in keeping with the formality of the design.

The ceiling of the ladies' reception-room by Will H. Low is gracefully entitled *Homage to Woman.* The canvas is oval and the composition follows this form in a very charming wreath-like effect. The chief figure, that absorbs the interest and attention of all the others, stands above them in a delicate shell: the masses of her golden auburn hair stream about her. A cupid sitting upon the edge of her frail bark is driving a flock of doves in harnesses of long blue, pink, and mauve ribbons. These rainbow streaks of colour and the feathered captives connect the upper group with two youths and a maiden who sit among banks of clouds, which are decidedly pink, as if from the reflection of a sunrise. The warm colour fades away into lighter shades above, until the cloud forms are broken, showing bits of pure blue. The circular movement is continued by three cupids balancing the chief figure, and four maidens with rose-wreathed hair, who float upward to greet her. Their mauve, violet, blue, and green draperies make a gay train of colour through the rosy clouds. This decoration, for the pleasant harmony of the

Copyright, 1899, by Will H. Low.

From a print by C. Klackner.

HOMAGE TO WOMAN. By WILL H. LOW.

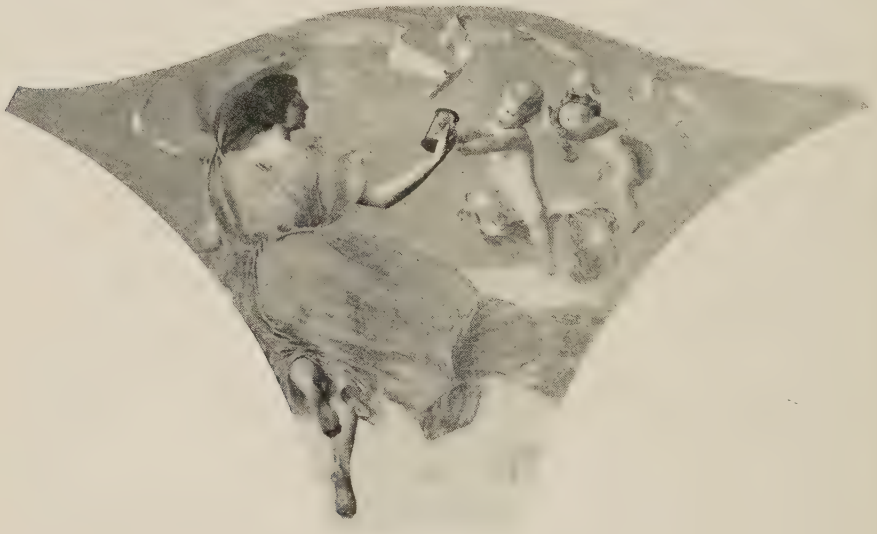
grouping, and for the colour which, though quite clear and decided, melts as a whole into one artistic impression, must be considered a very attractive and successful piece of work, probably the best that has yet come from the artist's hand, unless it is surpassed by *Golden Autumn*, a ceiling in a private house, which is accorded very high praise.

There are also to be found in this hotel a panel in the café by George W. Maynard, a ceiling in the ball-room by Frank Fowler, and panels by D. Maitland Armstrong. All this work was executed in 1892, and that in the Astoria in 1897.

The wall space of the dining-room of the Astoria is very much broken, owing to the numerous doors and windows, above which are C. Y. Turner's series of spandrel decorations that are a striking and distinguished feature of the nobly proportioned room. A rich peacock-blue background throws into relief the handsome types of the figures, each one having been specially designed with a view to filling its place in a scheme of full pure colour, and with interesting accessories that should give an æsthetic impression. Upon the north wall is a row of youths with birds of brilliant plumage, the artist having taken full advantage of the suggestive tints of the beautiful tropical creatures. This, which is the most original part of the work in conception, is yet not more pleasing than the other walls, where music, fruits, and flowers are typified by young people who sing, play, gather blossoms, or pick the ripe products of the trees. Painted with breadth and simplicity, and with an attractiveness that compels the admiration of many who confess that they do not care much for paintings, the series shows Mr. Turner's abilities to the best advantage, and is an accomplishment upon which his rank as a muralist may well depend.

The other decorative attractions of the house are found in the ball-room and the Astor Gallery, which are most lavishly ornamented. The latter, in which the paintings are all by Edward Simmons, ranks among the finest artistic achievements that the country can boast; and the artist has never surpassed the standard that he has here set for himself. The opportunity was one worthy of the most brilliant talents. The gallery, which is of most generous dimensions, is very finely proportioned. The walls and ceiling are cream-colour finished with much gold. Along one side a line of tall, stately windows looks upon the street. The paintings, which go entirely around the room, fill the lunettes between the ornamental arches of the windows, doors, and panelling. The subjects of these are *The Seasons* and *The Months*, but they are no ordinary conceptions of the every-day themes. Each of the sixteen compositions is a gem of exquisite fancy, painted with such lightness and brilliancy that it seems to have been tossed upon the canvas in a moment of exuberant happiness and freedom from care, and did not need to be worked over and spoiled by too much labour, but is just as it came fresh from the artist's first thought. This effect of spontaneity, however it may be obtained,— and it is often the result of the finest art covering the traces of study and pains,— is very rare, and adds the last charm to the decorations of a place like the Astor Gallery, which is devoted to social functions, music, and entertainments. The truly joyous spirit has quite as honourable a place in art as monumental dignity or elevated sentiment; and, since the character of the nineteenth century was none too light-hearted, and painters and writers were somewhat prone to take themselves very seriously, if not sadly, this delicious burst of gayety in the humour

of the eighteenth century is the more to be appreciated. The tone throughout the series is very light. The blue sky backgrounds are misty with faint, pearly clouds, in which sportive cherubs gambol; and the iridescent draperies, which but partly conceal the delicate figures of the fair galaxy of women that are the months and seasons, melt again into this tone, so that the

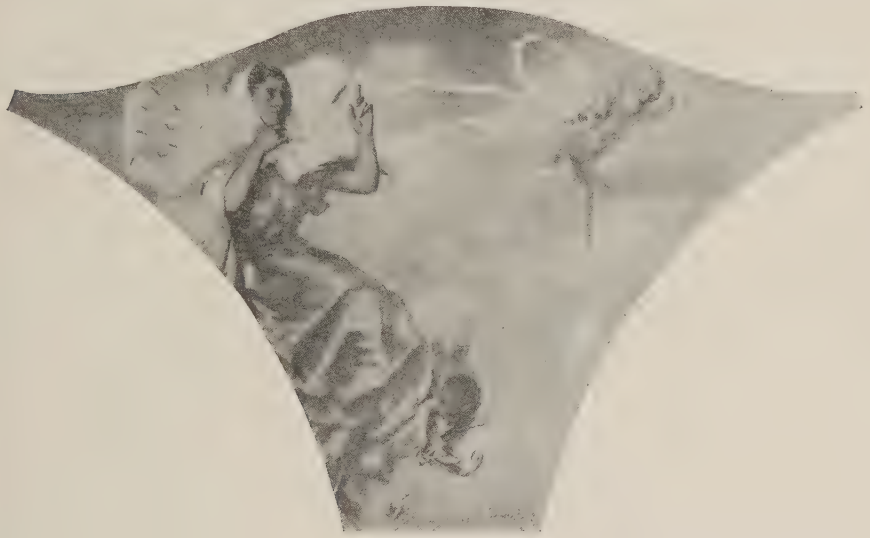


Copyright, 1897, by Edward Simmons.

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY.

whole impression is softly grey, with here and there a note of warmth. As the colour is in one lovely harmony, so the action of the figures is governed by a uniform sense of movement; and in this respect, while the artist has used his drawing with great freedom, he has practised restraint at exactly the right moment, so that what is really very active motion is managed with grace and lightness. The whole effect is so complete that it is difficult to choose one canvas that surpasses another, and

the decision wavers. *May* is holding up her dainty hands to ward off the roses with which a merry child is pelting her; *April* is drawing aside a drapery, to disclose a rainbow in the sky; *December*, about whom the clouds are growing dark, and who vainly shields herself with her wind-blown veil from the shower of snowflakes that a cupid lets fall; or *June*, where a



From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

By EDWARD SIMMONS.

handsome young lover — the only grown adult male on the walls — sits with his arm about his sweetheart. But the preference finally remains with *January* and *February*. The first shows a lithe maiden. Her back is turned; and her face, surrounded by soft, light-brown hair, is seen in profile. The thin material of her gown is blown out from her figure. In one hand she holds an hour-glass, which she offers to a cherub: the other grasps the end of a long cream-coloured ribbon, that

floats across the sky in graceful curves until it is caught by a second cherub that plays with it in the air. In February, a dark-haired, dark-eyed, sparkling creature is half sitting against the curve of the arch. She wears over her silk gown, to protect her head and shoulders, an ermine hood and mantle; but the wind maliciously puffs out the cape, exposing her bare arms, and a teasing cupid has seized the ends of the ribbon with which it is tied under her chin. At her knee another small being bends over her foot, trying to attach her skates. Only the painting itself can give the idea of the charming animation of the group.

Will H. Low's portion of the ball-room decorations consists of fourteen oval panels and six lunettes. In the former are figures representing the nations, with musical instruments typical of the various lands, and characteristic backgrounds and accessories. One of the most pleasing compositions shows a fair-haired woman, in a gown of large-patterned brocade with pink sleeves, seated in a garden playing on a guitar. Behind are high, steep-roofed houses. The most prominent panel, just over the stage, is devoted to America, a fair girl with a large national flag draped over her shoulders. The subjects of the lunettes are *The Dance*, *The Drama*, *The Music of the Sea*, *The Music of the Woods*, *The Music of War*, *The Music of Peace*. Unfortunately, the artist has used such bright colouring that the series does not quite take its proper decorative place on the wall, and rather mars the harmony of the handsome room. The ceiling, *Music and the Dance*, is by Edwin H. Blashfield. In this large space the cloudy sky has been made of great interest: the forms are full of character and have the beauty of nature, and the masses are so ably managed that they bring the

half-rings of figures at either side into one unbroken design. Nothing is cut out or harsh, and the light clouds half-veil the clustering forms. The slight motion to be seen when watching the heavens pervades the action of the musicians, the leader standing amid her choir and orchestra of fair women, that play upon violins and 'cellos. The bands of dancers are wreathed together hand in hand, moving as gracefully as the doves that lighten the deepened blue. The spirit of light-heartedness and joy reigns triumphant.

When planning the Hotel Manhattan (1898), Mr. Hardenberg continued to provide liberal opportunities for the decorators. The most prominent position is held by Mr. Turner's work in the rotunda, which consists of a frieze, two lunettes and three panels. Interest is concentrated upon the frieze, *The Triumph of Manhattan*, which won the commission in a competition held in the galleries of the Fine Arts Building in 1896. The central figure typifies Manhattan, and she is surrounded by other symbolic personages that are seated along a terrace overlooking New York Harbour. Behind them on the west are the Palisades of the Hudson; on the east is the Long Island shore, with the towers of Brooklyn Bridge rising in the gathering mist. The composition is completed on one side by historical persons that were prominent during the Dutch and the English supremacies, and have since added glory to the period of American Independence. On the other is shown the growth of commerce from the time of the Indians and the trappers. The upright panels between the windows contain figures of *Spring*, *Summer*, and *Autumn*,— three colonial dames clad in the picturesque costume of the Dutch settlers. *Music and the Dance* are depicted in the tympanums. In the addition

to the hotel just completed, Mr. Turner has another painting of *The Seasons*, and is now engaged upon a companion to it. There will also be a large panel by Kenyon Cox in the same corridor.

Copyright, 1896, by C. Y. Turner. From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1896, by Curtis & Cameron.

DETAIL FROM THE TRIUMPH OF MANHATTAN. BY C. Y. TURNER.

The *Italian Landscape* frieze by Frederic Crowninshield is a distinguished feature in the old café. The space is divided by pilasters, which the artist has connected with garlands festooned across the panels. The notions of these vary in importance from the simple theme of a garland hung against a stretch of blue sky with butterflies floating in the air to bits of pict-

uresque conventional gardens, where marble statues and amphoras are set among green hedges, beyond which are distant views of hills crowned with villas and monasteries. The introduction of life-size figures in the foreground gives a human interest to these charming scenes. All the subjects are treated with simplicity and breadth, and the series makes a very pleasing decorative effect. It will be continued upon the walls of the new café. The other paintings in the hotel are of so little merit that they need not be mentioned.

There are not any large number of important mural paintings in our private houses. It is surprising to find how few of our well-known artists have been called upon for a single order of the kind. Mr. Blashfield has the longest list of such commissions, his style being especially suited to the adornment of domestic interiors. After the Columbian Exposition he was one of those selected by George B. Post, the architect, to decorate the New York residence of the late Collis P. Huntington. But his success, and that of his confrères, owing to the wishes of the family, cannot be described in this book.

George W. Drexel, of Philadelphia, however, has not the same objection to sharing the pleasure which his library, beautified by Mr. Blashfield, must have afforded him. In this room there are two panels, *Prose* and *Poetry*, and a circular ceiling, deserving of admiring notice; for the artist seems to have a special gift for working in domes and all rounded forms. The figures are seated against a background of conventionalised design, with a wide band of ornament at the top, and with scrolls, upon which are printed one of the verses from the "Psalm of Life," interspersed with escutcheons bearing the names of the

subjects depicted, along the bottom. Here are to be recognised world-famous men and women of many different ages, each drawn with strict attention to historical accuracy of costume and accessory, and, where possible, of portraiture. Saint Francis, typifying Religion, sits very erect, his habit falls about his thin frame, his hands are clasped, his ascetic face looks out from the shadow of his cowl. Two great candles in antique candlesticks burn before him. Indeed, so interesting is each conception that, if space permitted, the writer would like to give a detailed account of each one: Saint Cecilia with a tiny mediæval organ; Harold Hardradu, breathing the boldness of the conqueror; Portia, interpreting the law; or Raphael, the fair young painter. Another exceptionally interesting interior is the Gothic supper-room in the New York residence of William K. Vanderbilt, Esquire, where the paintings are treated in a formal way, suggestive of the mediæval period from which the scenes are taken, and finely in keeping with the character of the architecture. In an archway on the south wall is *The Sword Dance.* The performers are tripping on a marble terrace, the young men holding their drawn swords above the heads of three girls that lead a train of fair companions between the shining blades. The queen of the dance carries a broad platter, and her flower-crowned head is outlined against a large tree which spreads out over the merry party. "Waeshael" printed in Gothic text upon an escutcheon hung in the branches breaks the mass of green that fills the upper part of the arch. The girls that follow the leader bear wine-jars; and the three compose a picturesque group, framed by stalwart gallants proudly arrayed in armour and rich doublets and hose. Squires with pennons and banners stand at the sides. On the

Decoration in the Residence of Adolf Lewisohn, Esquire.

From a Copley Print, by Curtis & Cameron.

A FLORENTINE FESTIVAL. By EDWIN H. BLASHFIELD.

north wall the spandrels show a design of horsemen and men-at-arms.

Other mural paintings by Mr. Blashfield are a panel of Justice in the dining-room of the Lawyers' Club, another in the residence of Adolf Lewisohn, Esquire, each in New York City; the large lunette, *Pittsburg*, in a bank at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania; the ceiling and general design of a music-room in the house of R. I. Gammell, Esquire, Providence, Rhode Island; and the panels in the Prudential Life Insurance Company's offices in Newark, New Jersey. George B. Post, the architect, ever a friend of mural painting, has felt special interest in Mr. Blashfield's work, and has been able to give him opportunities in the Huntington house, the Lawyers' Club, the Bank of Pittsburg, and the Prudential Life Insurance Building.

Since the time of the Columbian Exposition, Francis D. Millet has not been heard of in connection with any public enterprise; and there is only one painting from his brush to record, *Thesmophoria*, a companion to Mr. Blashfield's tympanum in the Bank of Pittsburg.

The *Thesmophoria*, or harvest festival, shows a procession of maidens with wreaths of leaves and flowers upon their hair, and light, trailing, classic draperies, marching along a road. They bear platters of fruit, bouquets of flowers, and palm branches; one holds a lighted torch, another, stooping to tie her sandal, has laid her palm upon the ground. Men carrying grain, and playing upon the flute, follow; and a beautiful bull decked with flowers, brings up the rear. Above the roadside wall, which is about breast-high, rise tall poplar and evergreen trees, between which are seen stretches of hills, their summits crowned by Grecian dwellings. The bankers seem to be very

Copyright, 1898, by Edwin H. Blashfield.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1898, by Curtis & Cameron.

PITTSBURG. By EDWIN H. BLASHFIELD.

Copyright, 1897, by F. D. Millet.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1897, by Curtis & Cameron.

THESMOPHORIA. By FRANCIS D. MILLET.

proud of their two decorations; for reproductions of them are printed at the head of the yearly reports, and a foot-note informs the public that Mr. Millet's procession includes portraits drawn from life of Mrs. de Navarro, Mrs. Alma Tadema, and other notable ladies.

H. Siddons Mowbray was one of those employed upon the Huntington house, which must be passed over in favour of the most ambitious piece of decoration that the artist has been called upon to execute,— the drawing-room ceiling in the house of Frederick Vanderbilt, Esquire, at Hyde Park, New York. This consists of a large oval panel, ten by eighteen feet, two smaller ones, ten by nine feet, and four smaller yet, seven by three feet. The largest composition shows the scene from the legend of Ceres and Proserpine, where Mercury brings back the daughter for whom her mother has mourned. The background of clouds is lighted by a sunset glow reflected upon some of the figures. Ceres is seated in the centre of one side; and behind her, rising to the other edge, are her wingèd attendants, the winds. High upon the opposite side of the canvas, Mercury comes flying forward, with wingèd helmet and *caduceus*, and a great golden-red mantle with deep blue shadows floating behind him. Before him is the sweet young Proserpine, whom he is holding by one hand, and guiding forward. She is a winsome, slight creature, clad in delicate pink, as frail and lovely as the spring flowers that blow at her coming. Any one acquainted with Mr. Mowbray's style can picture the soaring motion with which the figures play in the air, in attitudes that display the sure powers of a very able draughtsman, and the refinement, the witchery, the beauty of face and form with which he dowers the creations of his brush. The fresh flesh-

tones, soft wings, and the delicate pinks, bluish-green, pale blue, violet, and iridescent red draperies, amid the sunset sky, produce a colour impression to which the term opalescent can certainly be applied; for the mingling of the hues are, indeed, wonderfully similar to the changeful jewel from which the term is derived. The two panels next in size represent *The Earth* and *The Heavens;* the others, *Fruit*, *Flowers*, and *The Vines* and *The Fields.*

Mr. Mowbray also collaborated with Mr. Blashfield in the board-room of the Prudential Insurance Building, Newark, New Jersey, each artist doing certain panels.

In the music-room of the residence of Charles Y. Yerkes, Esquire, there are four overdoor panels by Will H. Low, the subjects of which are different moods of music, treated in the style of the Louis XIV. period; and in the drawing-room of the residence of W. V. Laurence, Esquire (both in New York), there is a ceiling by the same hand. Mr. Low has written quite a long account of the way the composition for the latter, called *Golden Autumn*, was evolved.* A sketch made ten years before for a line from Buchanan Read's "Closing Scene"

"Like some tanned reaper in his hours of ease" —

came into the artist's mind after carefully studying his space and having made several attempts at designs which should convey some phase of nature, as his client objected to heathen gods and goddesses. The painting is circular, and covers only a part of the ceiling,— the room being of a very irregular shape,— the remainder is finished with sheets of metal lacquered to a pale gold tint, which are fastened together, leaving

*"The Field of Art," *Scribner's Magazine*, April, 1901.

Copyright, 1899, by Will H. Low. From a Print by C. Klackner.

GOLDEN AUTUMN. By WILL H. LOW.

the edges showing, so that the effect is like delicate mosaic. The artist's mellow, golden shades in the evening sky, the sheaves, and the wheat-strewn field carry this on harmoniously; and the three reapers, one lying wearily on the ground, one

kneeling with arms laden with grain, and the third standing holding a sieve through which pours a stream of the winnowed wheat, wear draperies of orange, rose, and green.

Shortly after the Columbian Exposition, Edward Simmons

Copyright, 1899, by Edward Simmons.

MORNING QUITTING NIGHT.

completed four panels of cupids and banderoles which surround the large light in the library of the Metropolitan Club, New York City. He has since painted for the Louis XV. parlour of the same house, which contains Mr. Mowbray's beautiful *Ceres and Proserpine*, a ceiling entitled *Aurora and Tithonus*, a spirited composition treated rather realistically, the figures drawn in decided action and the goddess's chariot and horses in fine perspective. The room also contains four small panels, *Morning* and *Evening*, and two arrangements of cupids. And, for the dining-room, five panels of

cupids wreathing roses around banderoles, which are set into a fine early-Italian ceiling, richly carved, that was brought from abroad and put into place there.

Mr. Simmons is now engaged upon decorations for the

From Copley Prints. Copyright, 1899, by Curtis & Cameron.

By EDWARD SIMMONS.

dining-room in the New York residence of R. A. Canfield, Esquire. Only two of the doorway spandrels are finished. These were inspired by certain poetic images by Swinburne; and the left-hand composition, which shows *Morning Quitting Night*, is pronounced to be one of the artist's finest achievements. The figure of *Night* is very beautiful. She bends forward with outstretched hands, begging Day to linger. She is clad from the waist down in gold and silver embroidery, over which falls a drapery of semi-transparent black and grey gauze, with a splash of blood-red here and there in the net.

The background is a lightning-blue sky with an owl haunting the shadows.

John W. Alexander has under way a ceiling and panels for a drawing-room in the New York residence of James W. Alexander, Esquire. Only the latter are in place. The room is finished in white and gold, and the paintings are in tones of

Copyright, 1899, by C. Klackner.

PANELS FROM THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMAGE.

pale yellow and green. The large canvas above the mantel shows two women seated upon a divan, one playing upon a guitar, while another listens to the music. Over one door are seen picturesque maidens with large hats upon their heads, and wearing very full skirts, walking in an orchard of young trees, the trunks of which are painted white; over the other a group of dancers are tripping on the seashore.

The United States Pavilion at the Paris Exposition (1900) was decorated by Elmer E. Garnsey, whose ability has been so greatly appreciated by architects and their clients that he has

been employed for the general decoration,— or for some large portion of it — of almost every public building erected since the time of the Columbian Exposition, that has been mentioned in this book, besides many of a semi-public nature, and numerous private houses. Robert Reid also contributed to the pavilion the panel of *America Unveiling Her Natural Strength.*

Copyright, 1898, by C. Klackner.

By ROBERT V. V. SEWELL.

Mr. Turner, who is just now very much before the public on account of the enormous colour scheme which he designed, and has carried out with great success, for the buildings of the Pan-American Exposition (1901), has been a popular and busy worker. He has completed, besides the paintings mentioned in their places in the course of this writing, others that can be seen in the Bank of Commerce, New York, and the Hotel Raleigh, Washington.

Mr. Turner's work at Buffalo, and the popular enjoyment of the bright-coloured exteriors that he arranged with great

Copyright, 1900, by Robert Reid.

From a Copley Print. Copyright, 1900, by Curtis & Cameron.

AMERICA UNVEILING HER NATURAL STRENGTH. By ROBERT REID.

charm and variety, though interesting as showing the growing appreciation of the picturesque, and the warmth and gayety that is dear to the more light-hearted Latin nations, does not mark the beginning of a new movement, as was the case at the Columbian Exposition, and therefore need not be discussed in detail, as this record deals with matters of more permanent value.

Other artists whose names are connected with a few pieces of mural painting are Thomas W. Dewing, William B. Van Ingen, Albert Herter, Taber Sears, Arthur R. Willet, Joseph R. DeCamp and Robert V. V. Sewell. Illustrations are given of two panels from *The Canterbury Pilgrimage*, Mr. Sewell's frieze in *Georgian Court*, the residence of George J. Gould, Esquire, in Lakewood, N. J.

Since the time when Mr. La Farge signed the altar-piece in the Church of the Ascension, there has not been a single religious picture placed in any church which can be deemed of sufficient merit to be included in the connection. Many hopes were raised a few years since, during the remodelling of the interior of St. Bartholomew's, New York City; but, while nothing is left to be desired in other respects, the painting in the chancel is exceedingly disappointing.

That the paintings in our churches are nowhere near the artistic standard of those in our secular buildings is an unfortunate truth; and this gives an additional interest to the ambitious plan upon which Mr. La Farge is now working, for the Church of the Paulist Fathers, in New York. The illustrations given in Chapter I. are of the portions already completed.

The art which has been under consideration is so dependent upon the good will of the architects who build the walls that it

adorns, that it seems fitting to close with an acknowledgment of the debt that is owing to the late H. H. Richardson, and to Messrs. Leopold Eidlitz, George B. Post, McKim, Mead & White, Edward Pearce Casey, and James Brown Lord, who have made the opportunities by which American mural painting has attained the position that it now occupies.

THE END.

DATE DUE

FEB 4 1971

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

759.1 K586 40708

759.1 K586 40708

King, Pauline

American mural painting

DATE	ISSUED TO
[illegible] 1959	Phyllis Kobbeley
JUN 2 8 1965	Bindery
02 04	[illegible] ANITA L.

WHEATON COLLEGE LIBRARY
WHEATON, ILLINOIS